



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### Usage guidelines

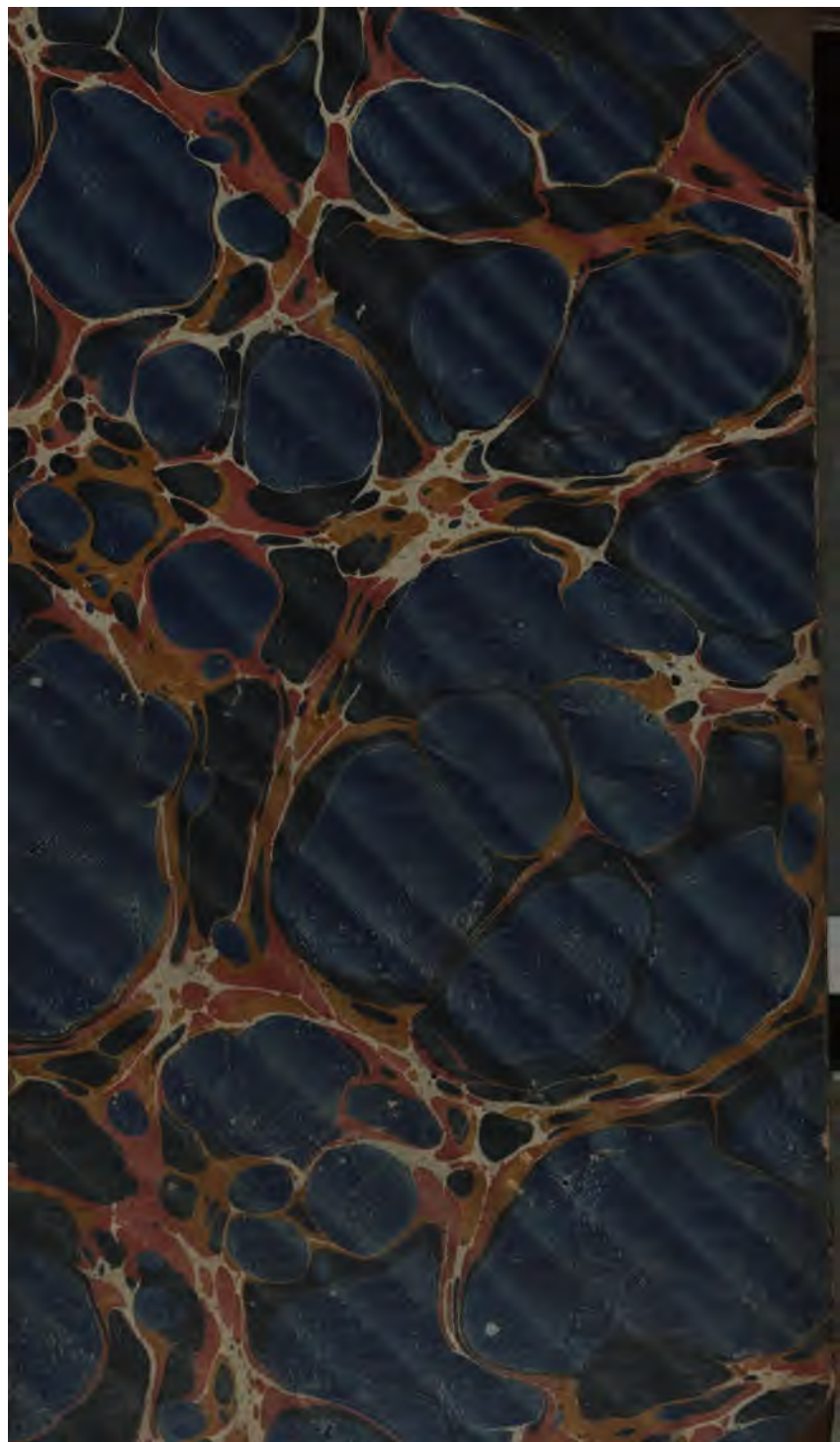
Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

### About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>





800055926X





## **HARRY HIEOVER'S MOST POPULAR PUBLICATIONS.**

---

In 1 Vol. demy 8vo. Price 12s.

### **SPORTING FACTS & SPORTING FANCIES.**

BY HARRY HIEOVER,

Author of 'Stable Talk and Table Talk,' 'The Pocket and the Stud,'  
'The Hunting Field,' 'The Proper Condition for All Horses,' &c.

"This work will make a valuable and interesting addition to the sportsman's library."—*Bell's Life*,

"In addition to the immense mass of practical and useful information with which this work abounds, there is a refreshing buoyancy and dash about the style, which makes it as attractive and fascinating as the pages of the renowned Nimrod himself."—*Dispatch*.

"It contains graphic sketches of celebrated sporting characters."—*Sunday Times*.

---

Price 5s. with Plates,

### **HARRY HIEOVER ON THE PROPER CONDITION FOR ALL HORSES.**

"It should be in the hands of all owners of horses."—*Bell's Life*.

"A work which every owner of a horse will do well to consult."—*Morning Herald*.

"Every man who is about purchasing a horse, whether it be hunter, riding horse, lady's palfrey, or cart horse, will do well to make himself acquainted with the contents of this book."—*Sporting Magazine*.

---

Price 4s.

### **BIPEDS AND QUADRUPEDS.**

BY HARRY HIEOVER.

"We recommend this little volume for the humanity towards quadrupeds it advocates, and the proper treatment of them that it inculcates."—*Bell's Life*.

---

Price 5s.

### **THE WORLD AND HOW TO SQUARE IT.**

BY HARRY HIEOVER.

# POPULAR NEW WORKS.

---

In 3 Vols. Price 2l. 2s.

## THE HISTORY OF THE P A P A L S T A T E S .

BY J. MILEY, D. D.

"DR. MILEY supports his positions with a plentitude and profundity of learning, a force and massive power of reasoning, a perspicuity of logical prowess, and a felicity of illustration, rarely met in existence amongst historians of any age."—*Morning Post*.

"Illustrated by profound learning, deep thought, refined taste, and great sagacity."—*Dublin Review*.

---

In 2 Vols. with Plates, 30s.

## THE SHRINES AND SEPULCHRES OF THE OLD & NEW WORLD.

BY DR. MADDEN.

"This work displays both extensive reading and extensive research."—*Athenæum*.

---

In 3 Vols. 31s. 6d., Third Edition.

## THE DESPOT OF EASTERN EUROPE.

By the Author of "The Revelations of Russia."

"The author has command of information, as well diplomatic as local and personal. It is powerfully written."—*Eaminer*.

"These volumes should be on the table of every one who hates oppression."—*Observer*."

# AGNES WARING.

*An Autobiography.*

EDITED BY

THE AUTHOR OF "KATE VERNON."

*IN THREE VOLUMES.*

VOL. III.



LONDON:

THOMAS CAUTLEY NEWBY, PUBLISHER,

30, WELBECK STREET, CAVENDISH SQUARE.

1856.

*249. W. 364.*





## AGNES WARING.

### CHAPTER I.

THE marriage ceremony was performed at mid-day, and a banquet ensued, whereat such prettily expressed good wishes were showered on the new married pair as, if but half fulfilled, would have left not a cloud on the horizon of their future.

Then, as Mons. de Lille's seignory was eighteen or nineteen miles distant, the painful moment of parting came all too quickly.

When Marie appeared in her travelling dress, the whole company rose and stood round her and

her husband, and Mr. Earle with simple solemnity and a perceptible tender tremulousness blessed them both. The mother and sister next embraced them, and all crowded round with another storm of congratulations and wishes, and they were gone; a crowd at the door cheered them lustily, and then a moment's pause ensued; Mrs. Earle had disappeared, Mr. Earle was gazing from the window; there was the usual hesitation what to do next now the great event was over, which young Victor happily ended by exclaiming loudly, "You will dance with me to-night, dear Madame Malcolm; you cannot refuse to dance at Marie's wedding."

I could not in truth refuse without seeming most peculiar, nor did I feel as usual superstitiously averse—my white dress was in character with my feelings. So I accepted poor Victor, to his evident joy, and as some musicians had been brought from a distant village, the large hall was appropriated to a general dance, in which master and men, ladies and servants all joined.

I figured with my friend, the *ex-courrier des bois*, and found a most persevering partner in Mr. Frank Dawson, who paid me a sufficient number of compliments to have set up a dozen men as heiress hunters.

And so in mirth and dancing, song and revelry—simple, hearty, joyous revelry—the hours fled away.

What though the mother swallowed some tears, she consoled herself in thinking she had gained another son, and smiled upon the gaiety of her guests. The father was grave all through. His earnest nature was too deeply affected by the morning's ceremonial to be readily attuned to the evening's merriment.

Frank Dawson and Father Mahony were the principal promoters of the revelry, from which Madame and I escaped shortly after midnight, and so ended the wedding at Oakdale.

I give but a faint sketch of this interesting and original family. To a more powerful pen they would offer a mine of characteristic pecu-

liarity. To me they are dear friends; not the *dramatis personæ* of a tale. Yet I wish I could fix upon the page their colour and form: something of the freshness with which my residence among them seemed to imbue my spirit; and that I could thus catch a ray wherewith to brighten the quiet course of my story.

For nearly a week after the wedding Oakdale was still the scene of festivity, but the guests were gradually departing. As to Frank Dawson, he found the dancing, &c., so delightful, that he almost lived on the road between "Liberty Hall," where the presence of a master was much needed, and Mr. Earle's hospitable mansion.

Having once broken through my rule, I was, of course, obliged to dance occasionally; and strange as such levity must appear, I really enjoyed it greatly. To dance at Oakdale, and in a crowded party, was totally different.

I had finished a *contredanse* with Frank Dawson one evening, and he was telling me how he intended to start at day break for Liberty

Hall, in order to return in time for our evening's amusement.

"You have wonderful energy, Mr. Dawson," said I; "forty miles on horseback over such a road is rather a high price to pay for a dance."

"Not with you, faith!" he exclaimed. "But when I was in Australia I thought nothing of fifty or sixty."

"Have you been in Australia then?"

"Oh, yes: I lost every shilling there three years ago, and came back with a doubt on my mind which I'd do—'list, or marry an heiress;—desperate alternatives. But an obliging old aunt,—the most conscientious woman I ever met,—died, and left me a few thousands; so I thought I'd try Canada. It's a pleasant place, and I fancy I'd get on if——"

"If what, Mr. Dawson?"

"If there was some angel of a woman who'd take compassion on me, or an interest in me."

"In short, a second edition of your aunt, eh?"

"Ah! Mrs. Malcolm, you are too hard on me,

sure. I'm the last man to care for money with a wife."

"Money is a very necessary thing, however," I returned, anxious to break off the conversation, and thinking no more of it.

Mr. Frank Dawson, however, did not return the next day nor the next, and on the evening of the third various conjectures were hazarded as to the cause of his absence. George Earle, the second son, volunteered to ride over and see what had become of him.

I could not sleep that night, yet the heat was already sensibly diminished, nevertheless I felt oppressed and restless. I had been quite carried out of myself by the contagious festivity around me. I had not for more than three or four years ventured to be so gay, and my natural disposition is to be cheerful. Now my spirits, recoiling from such an unwonted stretch, sank beneath their usual level, and the solemn past rose up rebukingly before me in the stillness of night.

I retraced my life, wondering at my own levity.

How vividly I saw Reginald Leigh as he appeared to me when I returned with Arthur from my ride the first day we ever met, and that first ball! I longed to see him again; to read in his eyes whether he connected my sudden swoon at Mrs. Longmore's with the picture of Chamouni. To watch his watchfulness, and above all, to indulge the long deferred delight of hearing my own story, so far as he knew it, from his lips. To hear of himself as gay, bright, happy, fearless, the cherished darling of a home. Oh! for courage to tell him *all*. For no one could feel for me as he could; to others I might describe all I had lost; he knew it—he had seen my father and mother, and poor unhappy Arthur.

As I thought of my brother, and the agonies I had endured on his account, there flashed across my mind a sudden unaccountable recollection of what Frank Dawson had told me of the young man who anticipated such a joyous meeting with his sister, and an intense curiosity seized me to



learn his name. Frank Dawson said he had also been in Australia!

Oh, gracious Heavens! could the invalid he so kindly nursed, have been my poor dear Arthur?

I almost sprang from my bed. How was it that I had not thought of this before! How was it I had let precious hours go by and never returned to his promised story! The remainder of the night I spent in fevered tossing or painful dreams. How I longed for morning; and when it came, with what eager haste I donned my clothes, forgetting that no speed of mine would bring me nearer the explanation I longed for with such agonised intensity. I started at my own countenance in the glass—it was so wildly disturbed—and the sight restored me to myself. I could not possibly encounter the family with so scared a face. I struggled to calm myself. I prayed long and fervently, and gradually became tranquil.

An old gentleman, cousin to Mrs. Earle, and

his two daughters, were the only guests now remaining, and they were to leave after breakfast. I listened eagerly for the arrangements of the day, not daring to express my anxiety that Frank Dawson should be recalled. I therefore heard with deep regret that both the young Earle's were to escort the departing guests half-way on the road. No one seemed to remember the intention George had expressed of riding to Liberty Hall. So I sat pondering on the probable delay that would occur before I could solve my doubts, and striving to be patient. At last I felt it would be better to be busy, and proposed to Eleanor that we should commence our readings and music that morning. She thankfully assented.

The day passed over sooner than I expected, but towards evening I felt an *accès* of gnawing restlessness that drove me forth alone—I escaped even my constant attendant Victor—and throwing a scarf over my head, wandered mechanically to the fountain. I sat down by its brink,

thinking over all Frank had said about his friend's presentiment. I felt strangely nervous, and could scarce repress a scream when Mr. Dawson suddenly addressed me in his rich brogue.

"Is it here you are, Mrs. Malcolm, all alone? It was a lucky thought sent me down here. I could see no one in the parlour or any where, so I thought I would try the fountain—a fountain of joy it is to me when I find you beside it."

"But what has become of you these three or four days Mr. Dawson? We have been organising a strict search for you. Mr. George Earle was to have headed one, and——"

"Faith!" he returned, "nothing short of the duties of hospitality would have kept me from Oakdale. I found a queer little chap just arrived at Liberty Hall, he says he's a fourth cousin of my mother's, so of course I was obliged to stay and listen to his stories, till, in despair, I left him in possession, and rode off on 'most particular business.'"

After exchanging a few queries as to news,

&c., I ventured to approach the topic uppermost in my thoughts, as I was particularly anxious that Mr. Frank Dawson should have no other listener than myself. I did not much fear his scrutiny.

“Do you remember the last evening we were here, Mr. Dawson? You promised me a story about a fellow traveller of yours who——”

“Oh! I recollect a queer poor fellow that was always afraid to hope. Well it’s curious enough, Mrs. Malcolm; I’ve been intending to tell you about him twenty times, for though I can’t say you are like him, you’ve a look sometimes that reminds me of him. I was a long time thinking who it was you reminded me of, but at last I hit on it. It is nearly three years ago since I sailed from Sidney for Bristol; we had a large number of passengers, and my attention was directed to a very gentleman-like young fellow, who was, I think, the only one among us who had nothing with him in the shape of provisions or comforts of any kind to

add to the scanty stock allowed to second cabin passengers; he drank nothing but water, never smoked—in short, lived on the ship's allowance; nevertheless, he was a pleasant, sociable chap, ready to talk, and could talk well. We pulled together uncommonly; he would sometimes take a drop from my sea store, not as often as I wished; he'd a cough, and I think when we came round Cape Horn he had not enough warm clothing, for he got very bad, and spit blood. Then it was I amused myself acting nurse, and we became very thick. He was never tired telling me how bitterly disappointed he had been in Sidney; poor fellow! he had evidently not been intended to rough it; and then he'd blaze away about all his sister would do for him when he arrived in England. How he seemed to cling to her; she used to get him out of all his scrapes with his father, he said."

"And his name?" I asked in a low eager voice.

"Oh, Waring—Arthur Waring. Well, when

we landed at Bristol he was very nervous and shaky, but on the whole, hopeful. I made him come to my hotel—a humble one, and from that he wrote to his sister. I suspect he had not a rap in the world. Well, the day but one after he broke into my room radiant with joy; his sister had written to him, had sent him money, perhaps would send more, perhaps she would come down herself to him from London. ‘What has become of the presentiments, my boy?’ said I to him. Do you know he quite clouded over; however, he brightened up almost immediately, and away he went to buy clothes—such elegant shirts and superfine pocket handkerchiefs, and then he was hard up again; for the sister did not come, nor write even for a while, and then he got a letter that knocked him up terribly. The landlord was eager for his bill, but poor Waring would neither give his sister’s name nor address; he got into a terrible state; he began to doubt his sister. ‘Young and beautiful as she is,’ he used to cry twenty times a day, “she

could do anything with her husband; if she forgets me, I've nothing to hope on earth.' I strove to cheer him, for I was sure myself the sister would act right. At last I found he was absolutely starving himself, for he kept away from me in his own room. I persuaded him out of that, but it was a cruel thing to see how glad he was when night closed in that another day was gone, and perhaps the morning's post would bring him a letter. One morning, feeling anxious to know how the poor fellow was I opened the door rather suddenly; he started up looking wildly, and exclaimed: 'You have a letter for me!' I shook my head, and he sunk back, a torrent of blood flowing from his mouth; that finished him—he died in three days after. I wish he had died on board ship, poor creature, he'd have had more comfort and compassion. As it was, the landlord behaved like a brute; he feared to lose his money. I was not rich enough to command respect, and to the last the poor fellow kept moaning: 'No letter, no letter!'

forgotten, forgotten!’ He literally died of it; but he managed to scrawl a few lines—no doubt fierce enough—to his sister, before he died. I directed them for him. Just before he went off, he opened his eyes, smiled on me, and said, ‘God bless you, Frank! You at least have stuck by me.’ I was obliged to hurry on directly I had closed his eyes; I had delayed too long already, but the morning I started a letter came containing money and an address, so, I suppose the landlord saw to the funeral. So much for presentiments, Mrs. Malcolm.”

Oh! what had I not endured while listening to this history; my own brother, who was dearer to me than myself, ebbing away, while I was powerless to save him one pang. I threw myself on the ground, careless, in my agony, what Mr. Dawson might think or suspect. I sobbed wildly; in vain I struggled to speak to my terrified and astonished companion.

“For God’s sake, what have I said, Mrs.



Malcolm? Let me hold you up; I wish some of the women would come here."

I broke from him, and kneeling by the fountain dashed the water over my head and face.

At last I could speak faintly, brokenly: "Mr. Dawson, you are surprised; but a dear relative of mine was once situated as you describe your unfortunate friend, and your story has affected me powerfully, as you see. One thing I implore of you—give me your word of honour not to mention my emotion to anyone."

"Faith, I'd cut my tongue out before I'd say a word to mortal; you may depend your life on me. Are you better now?"

"Oh, yes; yet stay, I cannot go to the house till I am more composed," and again I burst into tears. "Mr. Dawson, the good God will bless you for the kindness you showed to that unfortunate young man."

"Is it me. Oh! I did but little for him, all I could do was but a trifle."

"But," I exclaimed, "the sister! do you not think her a wretch?"

"I don't know; it was a mysterious affair."

"Do you remember her name?"

"Right well: 'Mrs. Millar, G—— Square, London:' that was her name and address."

"And," I cried, impelled by I know not what, "that was the name and address of a lady who perished two summers ago in the glacier near Chamouni, it is supposed by her own will—"

"You don't say so—that is stranger than all: but I'm more anxious to see you safe back in the house than about anything else. Come, take my arm, and trust me the ghost of a word good nor bad shan't escape my lips about your crying. Faith, I'm inclined to call myself out for bringing a tear to your beautiful eyes."

Wonderful as such self-command may appear, I nerved myself to join the family circle that evening. I dreaded rousing the suspicions of Frank Dawson, who, too thoughtless and careless for much penetration, had exactly the degree of

intellectual and imaginative quickness that would lead him like lightning on a track that other and colder minds would neglect, or reject as improbable. I therefore nerved myself to talk and act as usual. Nor was it so difficult a task to do so, for Frank's story had not roused me to that burning restless indignant agitation that during my married life had made "seeming" so often intolerable. No: it had laid an icy grasp of stillness on my heart, for was not all emotion too late! Desolate words!—hope destroying—they condemn the soul to all the gnawing unutterable agonies of helpless unresisting wrong and sorrow—aye! and remorse—for even while the passionate entreaties with which I had implored mercy from the man my own terrible error had made my husband, returned clearly to my mind, again and again I blamed myself for not having made stronger and more desperate efforts to save or at least to see my brother.

So at least I thought in the free woods, untrammelled by the accursed authority to which at

the period of my poor Arthur's death I was enslaved—yes, enslaved! For where is slavery so degrading, so intolerable as the power of an unloved husband; whose meanness, pettiness, selfishness, and tyranny, unsoftened by the intervening lens of affection, stand magnified by the nearness of view afforded by domestic life, till every shadow of regard or esteem with which you set out, fades into sickening contempt for the creature you must seem to honour, and actually obey.

“No letter! no letter! forgotten! forgotten!” with what cruel distinctness those words came back to me, as I communed with my own heart. While my every faculty of soul and intellect seemed concentrated in an intense glow of hatred against the master who had kept me from my place beside my brother's death bed! Hatred that burned to pass from simple sensation to active vengeance.

What! was this man to thrive and grow rich in the world's esteem, respected as the architect of his

own honourable fortunes, as the liberal dispenser of his wealth, as the irreproachable husband, father, citizen, and neighbour, while I was driven forth to wander in the world's wilderness, to escape the moral death, the paralysis of heart, which his conduct inflicted on me. And yet was that conduct exposed to the world's inspection; in what duty had he fallen short? He, too, judging by the standard of his own material nature might calmly invite inspection.

Had he not given me a luxurious home, and raised me from poverty to wealth? Had he not given me all a wife needed? Had he not given my mother food and shelter, my brother the means of transit to a land where he might make his fortune? Had he not done all this? Could I bring forward a single instance of what law would term ill-usage? No! Yet he had withered my life's life; he had made me the shrinking writhing instrument of torture to the only two beings I loved on earth; he had darkened my whole existence; he had almost distorted my

sense of right and wrong—yet he was unblamed. He went on his way, and thanked God that he was not as other men were: “extortioners, unjust, adulterers;” forgetting that the “publicans and harlots” go into the kingdom of heaven before him. But was it to be ever thus? Could I never draw from him the deadly payment I felt due for all he had inflicted?

I tossed and writhed in my bed; where was my boldness and energy, that I could invent and execute no scheme of vengeance? Was I to be the only sufferer? Were the tortures he had compelled my beloved mother, my own dear Arthur, to endure, to go unrewarded?

I was suffocating. I rose from my bed and threw open the window. My mental vision was obscured by the dark pall in which hatred enshrouded it—the deadly vapour rising from a heart whose moral harmony was broken, and whose mechanism was disordered. My love and duty to dear Madame Duchênois, my gratitude to Catherine for her unchanging trust, my own

wonderful preservation through the dangers and difficulties of my trying position—all, all were merged in the stern wrath with which my soul demanded its “hundred pence” from its fellow-debtor.

The gentle westerly breeze, laden with a thousand delicious odours which its humid breath called forth, fanned my burning cheek with a grateful cooling fragrance, and I grew calmer as I leant far out from the window, and my eyes rested on the rich loveliness beneath and around me, all bathed in the soft pure moonlight, sleeping under heaven’s tender guardianship. While the constant murmur of the river as it chafed against its banks, rose up musically solemn in the silence of night, like a whispered prayer; and as I gazed on that calm tender light, the memory of Reginald Leigh’s deep haunting eyes melted me with, I know not what of, tender regret, and my own burning eyeballs were blest with the refreshment of tears! I leant long from the window, feasting on the

banquet of beauty spread before me, till I began dimly to feel, not to reason, that all these rich gifts to man, this loveliness to gladden his eye, this fertile soil to make him of a cheerful countenance, the kindness, trust, affection of his fellows to strengthen man's heart—trust and kindness which I too had largely shared—were all freely bestowed by our common mighty Creditor, who had forgiven me as well as him, towards whom my evil passions streamed forth with such deadly vehemence, our ten thousand talents' debt of unpayable neglect, disobedience, and forfeiture; and a still small voice rose up with the river's murmur, and said, "Shouldest not thou also have compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee."

It was a hard struggle; but at last I closed the window, and knelt in prayer, for I had laid down prayerless. How could I pray with a mind fraught with antagonism to Heaven and its precepts? Then I slept with child-like peace, and arose strong, calm, comforted. Never again did



such deadly thoughts assail me—never more did I dream of returning evil for evil! There is a magic in forgiveness, a giant strength in resignation, that can say as the seemingly feeble shifting sand does to the wild tumultuous ocean, “here shall thy proud waves be stayed”—to the floods of evil that dash themselves in vain against this enduring barrier.

I was again calm and happy; happier than before the mental struggle I have striven to record. For again I was attuned to the law of love, and thus freely, joyously constrained to obedience. But a new feeling of warm regard attracted me to Frank Dawson. Never could he be again a stranger to me;—he that had closed my brother’s eyes, and shown him kindness when all kindred ties seemed broken. The gaiety which before I thought somewhat boisterous, was now but the effervescence of an overflowing heart; the noisy compliment that half excited my scorn, I could now smile upon good humouredly. His plans and projects had an interest for me, and nothing

would have given me so much pleasure as to have forwarded his fortunes.

Strange to say, I never felt this kindly, sisterly friendship checked or damped by any fear of encouraging his openly avowed admiration of me; as many men of higher polish and refinement than Frank Dawson would have considered my conduct encouragement. But as I became more cordial in my manner, I perceived a change in his; the indescribable tone of sentiment he was wont to assume when we were alone together, vanished into friendly frankness; the instinct of a true heart guiding this genuine son of Erin into a right interpretation of my feelings, where many a fine gentleman would have been wrong.

Time glided on pleasantly at Oakdale. I found Eleanor a charming and intelligent pupil. Mrs. Earle was overjoyed at my praises of her child; and our good host's delight the first night Eleanor and I sang a duet was quite pleasant to behold.

Meanwhile letters reached us from the new

married pair, who were amusing themselves at Montreal; but promised to return ere long.

I was re-learning the art of riding, under the united direction of Alfred, George, and Victor Earle; and thoroughly I enjoyed those equestrian rambles through the deep pine groves.

Frank Dawson was much with us, and when he was absent we missed his gay laugh, and ready good humour much.

Victor had great curiosity about England, and I sometimes found his questions troublesome, while they suggested the unpleasant idea that my silence regarding my own antecedents, must appear strange and suspicious in the eyes of the Oakdale family; so simple and true themselves.

But no doubts crossed their minds. . I was a widow, therefore it would be painful to me to mention the past, and recall sad memories. Nevertheless, Victor's favorite habit was to kneel by my side as I sat at the window in the dusk of the evening and begin "*Now, belle et tres*

*chère dame*, tell me of England, and what you used to do in your own house?"

The Tower of London was an inexhaustible subject, and Windsor Castle. Once he asked me if I had any brothers—the tears which sprang to my eyes as I answered "that death had dealt heavily with my near kindred, and left me alone in the world," got him a lecture from his mother, and secured me immunity on the score of relatives.

About a fortnight after the wedding, Mr. Earle and Alfred had ridden to a distant part of their territory. I can use no other word, and we had waited supper for them for more than an hour. Night had closed in before they returned, and we sat down to our postponed meal, feeling uncomfortable and expectant, when I caught the distant sound of horses' hoofs on hardened ground.

"I hear them coming," I exclaimed.

"And I," cried Victor, "and there are more than two horses. I daresay they have brought

Frank Dawson back with them;" he ran out eagerly to see—there was a sound of welcome and laughter, as if several people spoke together.

"I do not hear Monsieur Dawson," said Madame Duchênois, "and he is generally the loudest."

"There are certainly some guests," exclaimed Mrs. Earle rising, but our conjectures were put an end to by the entrance of Mr. Earle who ushered in, dear, good, penetrating Mr. Longmore. I rose with a little cry of delight to meet him; "Ah! Mrs. Malcolm, you did not expect to see me? but there's another friend of yours coming."

"What, my dear Catherine, is she—" I was beginning, when to my astonishment and momentary confusion, Colonel Leigh appeared in the doorway. I stopped short; I felt myself grow pale, and then the color returned slowly yet deeply to my cheek. He glanced quickly round, and then his eyes rested on me, flashing a sudden glance of pleasure, to which my heart bounded, yes.

Whether it was to watch me, to solve his own doubts, or to recognise the likeness that interested him, he was glad to see me; and I, while I trembled and feared—aye, and shrank from his scrutiny—experienced a strange thrill of delight.

Meantime Colonel Leigh was with his usual high-toned courtesy, going through the introductory ceremonies with Mrs. Earle and Eleanor, then greeting Madame with affectionate politeness, and finally myself; our recognition had been long before in that first glance. Colonel Leigh looked more bronzed than before, but there was a glow in his dark cheek, a light in his eye, an animation in his manner, that imparted to me too a strange sensation of happiness, when I should only have felt conscious of danger and difficulty.

Having reached me at last, Colonel Leigh subsided naturally into Victor's vacant place beside mine, while I still stood talking with Mr. Longmore.

"Oh! Catherine charged me with letters for your, here is one; I think there is another in it

from little Emmy; and when do you intend to return to Quebec? We miss you terribly, and you too Madame Duchênois. Ah! Mademoiselle Eleanor, I have been counting on the pleasure of seeing you this week past."

"But how is it, Messieurs, that we have the great pleasure of beholding you?" asked Madame.

"Why," returned Mr. Longmore, "I have intended paying a visit to Oakdale (a place where every one who has once been wishes to return), for some time, and happening to mention this intention to Leigh, who has been some time on the sick list, he seemed very anxious to come too, asked if Mr. Earle's general invitation would really entitle him to break in on Oakdale; I assured him that Mr. Earle always meant every syllable he said, that country air would do him good: we mounted our horses at day-break, met the lord of the soil about ten miles off, and here we are."

"And heartily welcome," chorussed Mr. Earle, his wife, and sons.

"But what has been the matter with Colonel Leigh?" asked Madame Duchênois.

"I got a scratch the other day, that was all," he returned.

"A scratch, indeed," cried Mr. Longmore; "why all Quebec has been ringing with his gallant defence, Mrs. Earle—Three to one; and came off with a severe thrust through the shoulder, and a cut across the head!"

"Good heavens! How?"

"Where?"

"What was it about?"

Asked all the ladies at once.

"Come, Colonel, speak for yourself," said Mr. Longmore."

"No, no," returned Colonel Leigh, laughing; "you tell the story better than I do, and make more of me than I possibly could venture myself, so proceed."

"I care not who tells it," said Madame, "so that my curiosity be gratified."

Mr. Longmore therefore proceeded to relate



how Colonel Leigh, having become noted for his ready and decisive council as to the disposing of some American evil doers who had been caught in the act of setting fire to a house, he was warned not to ride unarmed. A few weeks subsequent to this, on his return from visiting a detachment of his regiment, quartered at some distance from Quebec, he missed his way, and wandered for some time he knew not where, when he heard cries for help, and pressing his jaded horse in the direction of the sound, he found an elderly farmer undergoing a severe beating from three ill-looking armed men, who, nevertheless, seemed disinclined to take his life. But on the appearance of Colonel Leigh, they called to each other that "here was that d——d Britisher, and to teach him manners to free Americans——." Leaving the old man more dead than alive, they rushed on Colonel Leigh, who fortunately had his pistols, and shot one of the three as they advanced, but the second pistol hung fire; his sword (for he was in uniform), was all that now

remained wherewith to combat the two foes, who attacked him fiercely. His position on horseback gave him a slight advantage; and after a while the original victim came to his assistance. By this time Colonel Leigh had severely wounded another of the marauders; and the third finding the odds were against him, fled; not, however, before the Colonel had received a bullet in his shoulder, and a cut from a bowie knife across the cheek.

"It seems," continued Mr. Longmore, "that the victors proceeded to spoil the vanquished, for——"

"No, no," interrupted Colonel Leigh, "I did not; the old farmer proceeded to look for the money of which they had robbed him, and which was found on the body of the man I had shot."

"However," resumed Mr. Longmore, "they returned to Quebec together. Old Caillet, as he is called, extolling the Colonel's heroism to the skies—Dubois and Duguesclin were nothing to him—and he has been a lion ever since; the

ladies quarreling who should nurse him; Lady L. making him jelly; pretty Miss C. working him a cigar case; and *La belle et bleu Tarleton* writing him verses."

"Pooh, nonsense!" said the Colonel, "I obeyed a natural instinct for self-preservation."

Hundreds of questions were showered by all round—the young men were profoundly interested, Victor especially. I sat quiet and silent, but secretly revolving in my own mind how differently I should have felt had Mr. Longmore, instead of his animated well-told story of a successful defence, been the bearer of the sad news that Colonel Leigh's body had been found murdered in the forest.

"And was the man you shot, dead?" I asked at last.

"Yes; he was quite dead when Caillet knelt to search him."

I involuntarily shuddered.

"I really could not help it," said Colonel Leigh apologetically, "and the rascal deserved

it! I can tell you it makes a man feel very like a tiger when two or three set on him with an avowed determination to take his life if they can get it. But that is all over now. I have a week's leave to recruit, and never felt better. So I have come down here determined to be happy; and you? how well you are looking—a different being to what you were. I cannot tell you how terrified I was when I carried you to the sofa in that dead faint! I have not seen you since. You are quite recovered I trust?"

I bowed, while I felt the color rise to my cheek as he reminded me of my unlucky swoon; his words attracted no attention, for they were addressed in a low tone, while his large dark searching eyes dwelt on me with confusing attention.

I hastily opened Mrs. Longmore's letter to divert it, and to my delight found a small note, all scrawled over in dear little Emmy's straggling child's hand. A few loving words and affectionate wishes to see me again; a charge not to

forget her, and assurances that mama said she was a good girl.

That simple letter was very acceptable. I was still remembered by the faithful child; dear Emmy was always a bird of good omen to me. I looked up smiling to Colonel Leigh, and showing him the large writing said—"At least my correspondent is very legible. This letter is from a darling little niece of Mrs. Longmore's."

"Ah, the little girl you saved at the risk of your own life; Feilden told me all about it; yes, that was an heroic action, woman's passive heroism."

"Yes!" cried Victor, who had pressed in between his sister and myself, "Madame Duchênôis told us how Mrs. Malcolm saved the child, and made the man drag her first out of the water, and yet Mrs. Malcolm is a great coward."

"No, Master Victor, I am not a coward," I returned.

"Ah, ha! I know you are, for I was passing near the fountain one evening, and heard you

crying, oh, crying very much, and I was afraid you would be angry if I came to you; but Frank Dawson was with you, and I asked him what had vexed you, and he said you had thought you saw a buffalo among the trees, and were so frightened you cried bitterly."

My feelings during this speech, may be imagined. I was hot and cold, the general conversation was suspended to listen to Victor's remarks, and every eye was turned on me. I did not know how to exculpate myself, but to my infinite relief Madame exclaimed, "Monsieur Victor, it was laughing you mistook for crying, and the cause of it not a buffalo, but a bull, of Mr. Dawson's own making."

"Oh! I did not know you were there," returned the boy, not seeing the point of the old lady's observation, and she had turned immediately to talk of Quebec news to Mr. Longmore. I saw my greatest safety was in silence.

It was impossible to form any idea of the effect produced on Colonel Leigh's mind by this

most unexpected revelation: he had looked steadily on the table during Victor's oration, and he now turned to converse with Eleanor with that indescribable blending of chivalrous courtesy and yet playful superiority to which the difference of their years entitled him, and which had so charmed me in years before at Ashbury. How vividly it reminded me of those happy days. I stole a glance across him at my young friend. She was looking the very personification of girlish grace—a wild rose, from which the sun had not yet kissed off the dew—the blushing smiling shyness with which she replied to his questions and observations, might well draw his attention from my peculiarities and conduct. Yet there were not many years intervening between her age and mine;

“ Years are but ripples on life's shore;  
The waves that mark—are tears !”

and were time calculated by events and passions, what centuries separated me from that fair tranquil existence which as yet no breath of grief, or

regret, or evil, had ruffled. No—no, I could never again be as I was. “Youth has left me long ago, for ever.” Involuntarily a low sigh escaped my lips, which I would have given much to recall, for Colonel Leigh turned directly to me with the old enquiring expression of eye, and began to talk of Lady L. and Captain Feilden till we rose from supper. It was late, and our guests fatigued, so after a little pleasant general conversation, and many schemes for to-morrow’s amusement, we separated for the night.

It was a curious feeling to think that I slept under the same roof as Reginald Leigh. I had been glad to come to Oakdale to avoid him, and now he was here, in closer intimacy than ever. I would not for worlds be detected by him! I felt all the danger of sharing my secret with such a man. Not that I doubted his rectitude and high sense of honour, but as it was I had a sufficient struggle to resist the species of dominion his mind exercised over mine, and dared



not throw the additional weight of a mutual understanding into the balance.

It is an awful thing to be enslaved to another's intellect! No fetter can compare with the chain of a stronger will; and gentle, kind, courteous as Colonel Leigh was, I feared him. What and how much did he suspect? Would more intimate companionship weaken his suspicions by accustoming him to me in my present seeming, or confirm them by the frequent opportunities for studying me, which such domestication would permit?

For hours I revolved these questions after Madame (who had been much pleased and excited by the sudden appearance of Colonel Leigh), had at length sunk to sleep; she talked for a long time of his adventure with the American sympathisers, and the tears stole down her cheeks as she spoke of his danger. "Imagine, dear love," she repeated, "if my remnant of a worn life had seen the death of both Reginalds. For this younger one has a charm peculiar to

himself, yet different from his father. He will be a peculiarly happy, or a peculiarly unhappy man. He is now trembling on the verge of scepticism—I do not mean theological scepticism—but the wretched doubting as to whether there is any real happiness, and any triumphant good in this world. What a boon to him would a strong deep affection for some high spirited, pure hearted woman prove. May God guide him to it. Worldly misfortunes—poverty for instance—would have been a great antidote to the poison of his own mind, good and noble as that seems to be; but his heart is empty, swept, and garnished. His life has no prominent object, therefore are evil spirits struggling to enter in and dwell there.”

I was too anxious to be alone with my own thoughts to encourage Madame in discussing Colonel Leigh’s character. I therefore made no reply, and she continued: “He is very strong, and his strength is like that of a massive Gothic cathedral—lofty and grave—but with tenderly

carved niches and delicate heaven pointing spires; and grand projections, casting soft shadows, and lending shelter to weak things that may crouch beneath. Yet to create these shadows the sunlight of affection must shine upon the edifice, or its strength will become stern—its grandeur cold.”

How truly had my old friend sketched, at least my idea of, Reginald Leigh. Well might I shrink from the scrutiny of such a man—yet—my last waking thought was a strange feeling of perfect satisfaction. Come what might, Colonel Leigh’s presence seemed in some unaccountable manner to supply a need, to strike the dominant chord necessary to perfect harmony.

Oakdale never looked more beautiful than the morning after our unexpected guests had arrived. Colonel Leigh was enraptured. “This is an earthly Paradise of yours, Mr. Earle,” he exclaimed. “I used to think Longmore exaggerated when he described it; but the reality is far more charming than even his description.”

The tints of autumn were now daily deepening and growing richer. A slight crispness in the atmosphere, had replaced the oppressive heats, and as I stood at the window of the breakfast room listening to the merry talk of fishing, riding, amusement of every shape, I felt as if care and thought were for the time exorcised, and life was a holiday.

As we might every day look for a change of weather, Mr. Earle proposed our riding to a lake about seven miles off, where one of his head care-takers resided, before rain or storm came to mar the beauty of sky and sun.

We therefore retired to prepare for our ride, while Mr. Earle despatched a messenger to warn the steward of our coming.

It was still early when our cavalcade began its march. Eleanor and myself were the only ladies.

Mr. Earle and Mr. Longmore led the way; Victor, myself, and George Earle came next; Eleanor, Colonel Leigh, and Alfred brought up the rear.

Our road led up the ravine, by the clear rushing chafing river, under the shelter of its rocky banks, from which long flowery branches, and the fantastic tendrils of innumerable creeping and parasitical plants hung festooned in such profusion, we were frequently entangled in their meshes. Then what a wealth of colouring was strewn around;—deep reds, purples, yellows, every shade of green. No eye could imagine the brilliancy of an American autumn that has not seen it;—the lavish beauty wherewith inexhaustible nature loads this fair land.

The sense of existence alone was rapture on such a day.

After following the sinuosities of the glen, for more than two miles, we reached a ford, it was tolerably deep, and occasioned a slight change of position. I found Colonel Leigh beside me, and he laid his hand on the bridle of my horse, for I was evidently a less experienced equestrian than Eleanor.

As he did so he turned his eyes to mine with

an expression that said, "Do you remember?" as plainly, aye, more so than words could speak. I looked away, but could not suppress the sigh that rose to my lips; the next moment, however, we were on terra firma.

Mounting the steep side of the glen, we quickened our pace to a sharp trot, and plunged gaily into the deep dark forest, which rang with our laughter, and sent it back to us with a species of reproachful hollow sound as if to rebuke us for mocking its solemn solitudes with such ill-placed mirth. I said so to Colonel Leigh, who had taken George Earle's position at my side.

He smiled. "Your fancy is quite characteristic, and one cannot imagine a jovial band of foresters, such as Robin Hood's for instance, in an American forest. Mirth and jollity are natural under a brave old oak, but there is something weird and mysterious and melancholy about pine trees, you always associate them with Red Indians and lonely hunters, &c. But there is a charm about these wilds, a freshness, a new

life; can you not imagine a home in such a wilderness peculiarly delightful?"

"To some, yes; but to most it would be too lonely."

"A real home can never be lonely," returned Colonel Leigh, musingly: "or rather," he added smilingly, "one's ideal of a home. But I must confess I should be sorry to be shut up here with any one of the generality of your sex. I should cut my throat in a week."

"I should like to live at Quebec," exclaimed Victor, "and see the sleighing club turn out, and the soldiers."

"Come and see me then," said Colonel Leigh, carelessly, an invitation promptly accepted.

It was not yet noon when we reached our destination, a spot of singular beauty; for an hour we had been riding through a space of cleared ground, evidently the work of taste at no recent date, as the country presented park-like clumps of trees, and fine corn fields, the crops now cut and removed, attested the hand of

man. The ground, which had been undulating, broke into small abrupt hills, sometimes rocky, sometimes clothed with rich woods, behind which rose a blue line of mountain, the same visible from Oakdale, and a dark sea of forest spread beneath, over which we could gaze for miles, our way having been a constant ascent.

After passing through a singular gap, apparently torn open by some volcanic effort, in the rocky barrier here opposed to our progress, we reached the "Lac de Belle Vue," and halted by one consent to contemplate the scene before us.

To the north, the side by which we approached, the lake was sheltered by rocky wooded hills, bearing away to the east, till merged in the blue line, of which they were a spur; but here they rose from the water's edge, casting long purple shadows before the sun had reached its highest altitude, and sleeping with massive repose in its declining rays. The opposite side was less abrupt, and swept back with fair green pasture grounds, or rose into gentle wooded knolls. At



the head of the lake, and crowning a small eminence, round the base of which washed the same river, that after traversing the lake visited Oakdale, stood a picturesque, moss-grown log-house, and from its chimney the blue smoke curled lazily. The lake stretched south-westward for six or seven miles, and at its foot the hills receded, opening to the eye, a vista of pine forest, without which no scenery here would seem complete, while a distant peep of the southern mountains framed in all.

But these written descriptions of wood and water, mountain and valley, cannot convey the impression stamped upon my heart. No! the spirit of the scene was peace! The long shadows and sparkling light that alternately slept and glittered on the clear waters; the hush of all sounds, save the wild, sweet, thrilling notes of some peculiar bird; the cattle at the opposite side, standing drowsily in the water; the rich vegetation, the glowing woods, the unutterable repose, the one habitation, bespeaking a human

ingredient in the scene. Never did such varied and innumerable beauties combine to convey the idea of peace.

After a few minutes silence all burst into exclamations of delight—all, except myself. The effect this exquisite view produced on me was a tender sadness, that inclined me to tears; a deep regret, that I had ever permitted hatred, revenge, or bitterness to deform my soul; that I had not, in spite of grief, and wrong, and suffering, reflected back the gentleness and goodness of Heaven as did this fair lake, clinging ever with firm faith to the all-potency of good, as the best tribute to Him who gives it.

But the first *coup d'œil* had lost its tranquillising effect, and once more we rode merrily on to the cottage, which was inhabited by Mr. Earle's steward, with Jacques Pétian occasionally as an assistant.

Here a substantial luncheon was prepared, and a gayer party than ours seldom have discussed an excellent meal.

It was spread on a species of natural terrace before the cottage, from whence we looked down the lake; while at our feet was a pretty landing place, formed of rough moss-grown stones, where lay two or three boats of different sizes. From this point of view, we could perceive several islands lower down the lake, some rising into bold rocks, some softly wooded.

"Jacques," said Mr. Earle, "we will row to the Island of the Tombs after luncheon; look out for the men."

"That is an ominous name, Mr. Earle," said I.

"The island was so called in my father's time from a number of graves found in it; on opening one a long tress of black hair was discovered, perfectly preserved, and the skeleton of a tall man. It is a curious place."

"But, Mr. Earle," exclaimed Mr. Longmore, "I protest you have too much of this world's goods; two earthly Paradises is not a fair share for one man."

Mr. Earle smiled. "It *is* rather too much for me. This was part of a large property bequeathed to my mother by her uncle. I sold it to an English gentleman five and twenty years years ago; he was a curious, melancholy fellow, and had an only daughter; he built this house, got the land into capital order, but after he had been here twelve or thirteen years his daughter died. Then he begged me to buy back the land, and offered it to me for the same money he gave for it; of course I would not hear of that; but I bought it at my own price, and he went away. His daughter was a fair girl; she, too, is buried in the island we are going to see."

"Well," said Mr. Longmore, turning his chair so as to look completely down the lake, "I would not care if I was master of so sweet a spot. Do you intend to keep it in your own hands?"

"I am not sure; I wanted to make a nice home of it for this boy if he would marry and settle," slapping his second son on the shoulder.

"But he is so given to roaming that I do not think he'd settle in Eden itself till he has seen Europe."

"No," said George, laughing, "I fancy a soldier's career; and I have nearly got leave to list."

"I think I'd like a good neighbourly tenant," resumed Mr. Earle, "but I am in no hurry."

Colonel Leigh had risen from the table and stood on the edge of the terrace at some little distance, seemingly so wrapt in thought that I did not think he heard what was going on; he turned, however, as Mr. Earle ceased to speak, and observed gravely, as if quite in earnest, "Promise me, you will never close with any one for this house and the land round it, without giving me the refusal first."

"What," cried Mr. Longmore. "The fastidious, refined Colonel, turning settler. Impossible! What would you do for regimental business, mess dinners, a club, and evening parties."

"As well as they would do without me; and

instead of them—till the soil, sell the produce, tyrannise over my *employés*, take my seat in the House of Assembly, introduce beneficial measures, lay the foundation of a fine old Canadian family, &c., &c., &c., too numerous to enumerate."

"But then you must marry," said Mr. Earle, gravely.

"Is that so desperate an alternative?" asked Colonel Leigh, with an air of quiet curiosity, at which we all laughed.

"Nay, I should be the last to say so," returned our kind host. "And now let us make for the boats."

"And remember," said Colonel Leigh, gravely, "I am perfectly in earnest as to my wish, that you should not dispose of this property without my knowledge."

"Very good, very good," replied the other.

Our row to the Island of the Tombs, and our ramblings there were very very pleasant.

I found Colonel Leigh often near me; he

seemed to have thrown off both reserve and watchfulness. I felt quite at home with him, and insensibly revealed a thousand thoughts and sentiments usually hidden deep within my heart. I know not by what talisman he unlocked it, but, how marvellously he seemed to divine my ideas, to solve the contradictions in my nature which I could not explain myself. There is a wondrous charm in being understood; in feeling that the true springs of action, ay! even of error, are comprehended and appreciated! Over what a multitude of subjects we wandered in that delicious interchange of thought, and where we differed " 'twas not in kind but in degree."

Reginald seldom spoke of his own opinions or convictions, but when he did, what deep thought and strong feeling he displayed! this was the first glimpse of his inner, better self, he had ever given me; therefore, oh! beautiful lake, thy memory returns—nay, rather remains with me, fraught with all that can gladden the eye, rejoice the heart, and fill the soul with that full tide of

contentment which, welling up in every void, lies still and calm in the plenitude of satisfaction.

Our evening row was even more delightful—we were just sufficiently tired to enjoy quiet, and watch in silence the changing tints of lilac and gold deepening into an indescribable soft dark blue on the distant mountains, while long purple shadows stole over the lake, and every herb, and every bough, seemed endued with a tender, languid grace. At the command of Jacques, the boatmen of the three boats broke into a species of evening song or hymn to the virgin, that completed the charm. I do not think either Colonel Leigh or myself spoke one word till we arrived at the landing-place under the terrace. I felt in a dream—deliciously happy—with just that vague amount of fear tinging my happiness that made me clasp it convulsively, and steep myself in it lest it should evade my grasp and vanish. I have a deep capability for enjoyment, and thought—ah! still think—a few hours of



intense bliss can well repay the suffering such a disposition entails.

In stepping from one stone to another up the rude ascent, I did not hold up the cumbrous folds of my riding dress with sufficient care, and slipping in my progress, I fell, and sprained my ankle severely.

Of course the whole party assembled round me. Mr. Earle raised me with as much care as if I was his daughter—dear Eleanor strove to allay the pain by friction, and Jacques applied some famous decoction of herbs manufactured by himself. Victor could not be persuaded to stay outside with his brothers and Colonel Leigh, so I was well cared for.

But in vain I attempted to use my foot—riding was out of the question—and therefore all busied themselves in devising a conveyance, as it was already full time for us to be on the road to Oakdale.

At length Jacques and the steward discovered a very ancient spring cart, the springs of which

were broken, and having made some impromptu repairs, and put straw and a soft bear's skin at the bottom, my horse was harnessed to it, and I was placed therein with great care by Messrs. Earle and Longmore.

Victor begged leave to drive this splendid chariot, and wished his own horse to be also harnessed, tandem fashion; but I begged for a compromise, and at last we started.

It was a painful journey, and though I endeavoured to reply cheerfully to the frequent enquiries of my kind friends, I was nearly stupified with pain, yet I could perceive how constantly Colonel Leigh kept at the horse's head, checking the pace in rough places, and guiding him into the smoothest parts, for which trouble Victor did not thank him.

It was a dark night; suffering made me nervous. I was very glad when we reached Oakdale, and I had retired to my own room.

## CHAPTER II.

It was provoking to be imprisoned during the lovely autumnal days, which were fleeting by so fast; nevertheless, I was compelled to keep on the sofa all day, after Mr. Earle, with fatherly care, had carried me from my room in the morning. There Eleanor brought her books, Victor his fishing tackle, and every one their quota of kind attention. Colonel Leigh was less with me than the rest—perhaps he thought himself too much a stranger to obtrude his care or interest upon me, perhaps he had no wish to display either.

The whole party were away from morn to

dewy eve, fishing, shooting, or riding; and once that Eleanor had joined them, she returned eloquent in Colonel Leigh's favour—"He was so well informed, so elegant, so different from every one else," that I began to fear for my pretty friend's heart; for I felt that no unformed mind, however pure and true, could ever satisfy Reginald. Yet she was so graceful and attractive, any man might be charmed into "making love to her," to use a common and inelegant expression.

The third day of my imprisonment I was already much better, and Mrs. Earle suggested my venturing out in a species of light carriage, which she was in habit of driving herself. But I felt it would be imprudent to venture so soon *en voiture*, and declined. It was then agreed that Madame and Eleanor should accompany her on a visit of enquiry to the house, or hut, of a runaway negro slave, who had taken refuge with Mr. Earle, and whose wife had lately added an item to the inhabitants of Oakdale district.

I was not sorry when I was alone. I had always much to think of, great need of self-communing, and silent efforts for self improvement.

My sofa was placed near the window of the breakfast-room, but I was sufficiently well to sit up, my foot supported on a small ottoman. It was pleasant to sit there and muse. Had I not been marvellously guided and protected, to be here safe, respected, at home amid such kind, self constituted kindred. Could I have hoped for a tenth part of the success I had met when I arrived so lonely and hopeless in London more than two years ago; I seemed now to feel in its full extent the awful destitution, the fearful wretchedness of my position, which then I dared not dwell upon. I raised my heart in gratitude to God—yet in trembling, for the extraordinary facility with which I had surmounted obstacles, filled me with a strange dread for the future.

Then I turned to poor Frank Dawson, wondering at his continued absence, and reproaching

myself for having so nearly forgotten him, resisting by this steady process of thought a strong inclination to muse vaguely on what Colonel Leigh had said during our expedition to the Island of the Tombs.

I had sat thus for half an hour when the door opened, and Colonel Leigh entered gently, as if he feared disturbing me. His appearance was so unexpected that I could scarce suppress a scream of surprise.

"Will you let me write a letter here?" he asked, "I just now recollected I must despatch one of some importance, and hurried back. The rest are fishing; they expect me to join them a couple of miles up the river when I have despatched my missive."

Of course, I made no objection, his writing case was speedily opened. It was a brief letter, and a few minutes saw it signed, sealed, and delivered to a messenger. Colonel Leigh then rose, and came to the window—he leaned against the frame, his arms folded, his eyes fixed upon me.

"And you are really better? I venture to make special enquiries because you have not as usual a crowd of officious friends, among whom any demonstration of mine would be intrusive, being but a stranger."

He, my early friend, spoke thus; I fancied, too, with some emphasis.

"Kindness is never intrusive," I replied, "and so near a friend of Madame Duchênôis cannot be considered a stranger by me."

He smiled. "I suppose the dear old lady has told you her early fancy for my father. I was not quite unknown to you that first day when you took me for a lunatic, or some monomaniac at least."

"No, I had not the least idea who you were. I fancied Mrs. Oldham had been a Miss Harding, and though Madame Duchênôis spoke of a young Reginald, I had no idea it was you; I mean that you were in the army."

"Indeed!" a quick keen glance. "My father changed his name for a property. Is it not

curious to think of one's father having been in love, and miserable, and restless, and unreasonable, just like his foolish son; and that dried up quiet old people who seem incapable of joy or sorrow should have felt the wild excitement, the anguish, the joy of such a passion. Yet Madame Duchênois has not outlived her tenderness; I am still dear to her as the son of Reginald Harding. What strange mixtures of Heaven and earth women are."

"Madame Duchênois' early recollections were kept alive by an unhappy marriage—sorrow makes memory's pages indelible; happiness may forget, but grief always remembers."

"It must be so," returned Colonel Leigh thoughtfully, "yet I wish other lips than yours told it to me; for I should have thought, that if happiness forgets, you too, as well as her you so closely resemble, would have had short memories. Agnes Waring was not only beautiful, but cherished, beloved—yet—"

He paused, and looked at me inquiringly. I

---



felt I was about to pass through an ordeal; and though I trembled, nerved myself, and listened eagerly, he still paused, and I ventured to ask: "yet, was she not happy?"

"I will tell you," he returned, seating himself beside me. "My Regiment was quartered in a manufacturing district about six or seven years ago; we were there to quell riots and disturbances, which was soon accomplished. In return, I suppose, we received much hospitality from the families in the neighbourhood. One of the most beautiful Villas in the county, belonged to a Mr. Waring—a man of high standing and much esteemed. Some of our superior officers had dined there; and gave a delightful description of the entertainment, the entertainer, and his wife: but he was less indiscriminately hospitable than the generality of his *confrères*.

"I was, therefore, conscious of a wish to make his acquaintance—a faint one—for I was already past the period of ardent wishes, except on points that touched my passions or affections.

“ One morning, some lady friends proposed calling on Mrs. Waring; we were riding at the time, and our horses’ heads were immediately turned in the direction of Brooklawn.

“ Mrs. Waring was at luncheon; and we were invited to join her. She was a gentle, refined, womanly woman, of another grade evidently from her neighbours; but I had scarcely engaged her in conversation, when the door flew open, and there entered a young, radiant beautiful girl, her riding-habit gathered in one hand, her hat in the other, and a cloud of golden brown hair falling on her shoulders. She entered with a smiling address to her mother, which the sight of so many strangers arrested. She stood a moment with the shy startled look of a wild deer; and then, as she recognized some of her mother’s visitors, came forward with a graceful frankness, like a cherished favorite that depended on finding kindness everywhere. I was inexpressibly charmed with this exquisite home bird. There was a tranquil depth in the large dark-blue eyes she

raised at intervals, enquiringly, thoughtfully, fearlessly, to mine: a repose, a wondrous strength even in the attitudes of her slight pliant figure. She said very little, but listened attentively to my conversation with her mother—holding back her luxuriant hair to look at us, with the boldness of perfect innocence; and when she spoke, it was in a low rich tone, not high pitched like the voices of most very young girls.

“I do not think I ever before felt so strong a wish to glance into any heart as into that of Agnes Waring. You will laugh at the romance of this description; it is a faithful account of my own feelings and impressions.

“We, that is the officers of my regiment, were about to give a ball; something was said of it and Miss Waring at once declared her anxiety to go. Of course I readily volunteered an invitation, and in return received a promise for the first waltz with the beautiful *débutante*.

“I shall never forget her at that ball; she looked a very spirit of joy. There was an airy

grace in her every movement, a buoyancy, an exaltation quite beyond and above mere girlish glee. I had often met and been charmed with lovely women—more lovely perhaps than Agnes—but I never before felt the same wild thrill as her eyes sent through my heart when suddenly raised to mine with their peculiar earnest questioning glance, which not even the deep sense of enjoyment could alter as she leant on my arm, or sat by me in the ball-room. Then she showed, with such artless candour, a certain curiosity about myself, my tastes, my pursuits; which yet the veriest coxcomb could not construe into admiration. I had never met with so strange a combination of innocence and deep thought.

“Although her senior by ten years, I felt she was in many points my equal, and the extraordinary force of attraction she exercised over me, the irresistible desire to fathom the depths of her soul and win the treasure of her affection, grew more and more unconquerable each time we met, for I think she would have loved me, or rather

might have loved me, there was a strong affinity between us. But I was a younger son, and at that period somewhat of a prodigal, unsettled, and careless of much I now think essential. I did not dream of marrying, and Agnes was scarce more than a child in years; she did not care for me, she never gave me a thought. Even if she had, her father was ambitious; so I crushed down the instincts of my heart, told myself I was a fool, and like the rest of the world shut my eyes to true wisdom. There are one or two more distinct traces of our acquaintance which I recal. I remember a pic-nic in the neighbourhood of ——”

And Colonel Leigh paused as if lost in thought, while I, drinking in every delicious word with an avidity, which for the time absorbed every faculty into attention, and eager only for him to continue, in my anxiety supplied the word for which he seemed to pause, “Ashbury.”

His eyes were instantly on me, and I hastily added, “so you named the town.”

“ Ah, yes!” he replied, again pausing for a moment, and continued quietly, “ At this pic-nic, then, I steadily avoided the indescribable charm of Miss Waring’s society, but could not resist the temptation of a moon-light ride home with her. It was a most delicious night, she was peculiarly confided to my care. I felt I should not again have such a chance of *tête à tête* conversation, and abandoned myself to enjoyment. I remember describing Switzerland to her, and her expressing an ardent wish to visit that country. I little thought how that wish would be fulfilled.

“ I mention this particular day because it was to her an eventful one. Mrs. Waring had invited the whole party to return to her house, and there we were joined by Mr. Waring and a friend, a huge coarse red-faced man, whose shoulders seemed meant by nature to carry a hod, and his arms to wield a pick. I felt chafed that he should sit in the same room with my beautiful delicate Agnes, but when I perceived

his small fierce stealthy eyes fixed upon her with evident admiration, it required all my self-command not to do something outrageous, so enraged did I feel. I kept close by her side, for a deadly loathing dread of this man took possession of me; in vain I implored her not to dance with him. She could not refuse her father's guests, and her frank, pure nature laughed at what seemed my ill-tempered whims. Nevertheless, the idea of her having given that man her hand even in a dance haunted me with horror, which the worldly every day mood I, like other men, strove to cultivate, in vain attempted to sneer away.

“At length, a few days after this pic-nic, we got the route. I called to say adieu, and though I had no right to be so, I was disappointed at Miss Waring's cool composure in bidding me good bye—exactly the right amount of cordiality,—less would have pleased me more. I gathered the reins in my hand, and without permitting myself to seek one more glance from those sweet eyes, drove away. I never saw her again, at

least—but forgive me, such strange delusions or convictions crowd on my mind—I must hurry on.

“We went to India, and new scenes produced fresh impressions and old ones faded, yet I never quite forgot Agnes. As I wearied of the acting and seeming, the coldness and sameness of the world, I thought more of her, and longed at times to sun myself in the radiant smile that so often parted her soft tremulous sensitive lips. Female beauty always suggested a contrast with hers. A vague wish to know who had won the affections of her warm heart, which seemed to cling so fondly to her parents and her brother, occasionally presented itself; still my memory of her was fast sinking into a pleasant dream, when it was roused by the news (conveyed by some Ashbury correspondent to a brother officer) of Mr. Waring’s sudden death and bankruptcy.”

Here Colonel Leigh paused, and bending towards me, asked, “am I wearying you with my long reminiscences?”



"No; far from it," I replied, with wonderful composure, "your story interests me."

In truth, the intense emotion with which I had at first heard him, had subsided into a strange curiosity—marvellously apart from self—to hear another's version of my own tale. Time enough after to weep and pour out the agonies of my heart to God, in whom alone I dare repose the confidence I was cut off from on earth. I was therefore surprisingly calm.

Colonel Leigh looked at me scrutinisingly, and then bending his eyes on the ground continued—"I confess I thought often of the terrible change such a catastrophe must have wrought in the fate of that bright young creature I so much admired. Nevertheless, I knew she had wealthy relatives, and did not for a moment imagine she could ever experience the horrors of poverty.

"It was a year before any further tidings reached me of Agnes Waring; when again the same brother officer announced that he had heard 'poor Waring's widow was living in very reduced cir-

cumstances at Ashbury, and that the beautiful Miss Waring was giving lessons in music or some such thing.

“ This moved me a good deal ; Quixotic schemes of returning to England and seeking her glanced through my mind, and were dismissed, for they were but dreams. Our troops were just then engaged in an unimportant but troublesome war with a mountain tribe, and no officer could well seek for either leave or exchange.

“ Thus time went by, and at length a newspaper informed me that Agnes Waring had married, and her husband was the vulgar coarse dog, whose name—‘ Millar’—had impressed itself on my memory from the instinctive enmity I had felt against its owner. I never argued that it might be some other Millar, a certain presentiment told me it was the same.

“ This marriage conveyed to me a sombre conviction of some terrible necessity which could alone have won Agnes to it. True, my remembrance of her, tho’ clear, was less vivid, less

personal than when I first landed in India; but I could not refrain from bitterly regretting the iron force of circumstances that condemned her, like many another beautiful and helpless woman, to so wretched a fate.

“About two years after the desultory warfare I have mentioned was over, I was sick of India, and exchanged into my present regiment. I returned to take the command of the dépôt which was quartered at Manchester, and within a couple of hours of Ashbury.

“Of course I made my way there, and as I loitered about the streets thinking of my former sojourn there, and the increasing coldness and indifference I felt towards everything—in short, feeling worthless and *ennuyé*—I was accosted by a fine old man, who recalled himself to me as the Rev. Mr. Herbert, and after a moment or two I remembered he had been a great friend of the Warings.

“We went together to dine at one of the hotels and I soon drew him on to speak of Agnes. The.

tears rose to his eyes as he described her grand courage and noble bearing under her sad reverses; and as he spoke, I felt how inferior was the bravest soldier's daring. But when he told how vain it all was to save her from being sold to such a mere animal—for what? That her relatives might be saved the expense of assisting to maintain her mother, or forwarding her weak but prepossessing brother, I could scarce restrain the curse that rose to my lips. A man beaten in fair fight

‘ Looks proudly to Heaven from the death-bed of fame,’

But a woman, worsted in a conflict, such as Agnes experienced, is condemned to the gallies for life. What was death compared to such a union? Freedom, and slavery, the most degrading! My soul sickened at the thought. What! the delicate and exquisite mechanism of a nature like that of Agnes—pure, warm, proud, loving, disorganized, and crushed in the rude grasp of a barbarian.

"It seemed, too, that the poor mother had not long survived this detestable marriage; that the brother had been mysteriously banished. Finally, Mr. Herbert admitted that from the long silence on the part of Agnes, and various other slight indications, he feared she was not happy."

At the poignant memories his words recalled, I could not suppress a quivering moan. Colonel Leigh suddenly clasped my hand in his.

"You suffer!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, my foot pains me," I faltered, withdrawing my hand, "pray continue, we shall soon be interrupted."

He sighed, gazed dreamily through the window, and passing his hand over his brow, resumed: "It was in spring I had met Mr. Herbert, and in the end of June I was in town with my sister, Mrs. Oldham. I was always happier with her than any one; we knew each other thoroughly; in short, though brother and sister we were friends.

"At breakfast one morning she looked up sud-

denly from the paper, exclaiming, 'How dreadful, what an awful catastrophe.'

"What is it? we asked, and she proceeded to read an account of a fatal accident at Chammouni, and to my horror the name of the lady lost in the *mer de glace* was Millar.

"'Surely,' exclaimed my sister, 'it cannot be that beautiful young woman we met in Kensington Gardens with Lord Gresford's friend, Mr. Davis.'

"In short, after some conjectures and enquiries, it proved to be poor Agnes—my beautiful unhappy Agnes—who had thus found freedom. Then came a vague, half-credited report that she had committed suicide."

"Did you believe it?" I asked tremblingly.

"Yes—no," he returned thoughtfully. "At first I did, and pined to have the heart's blood of the man that drove her to it."

I shuddered at his deep tones; this thirst for vengeance which I had so often indulged shocked me in another.

“But,” continued Colonel Leigh, “the more I thought of all I had heard and all I knew of Agnes’ character, the more convinced was I of her superiority to the cowardice that flies to death rather than bear present evil.

“The subject was much in my mind, the constant renewal of it in the papers, the various reports current concerning it affected me deeply, and increased a species of hopelessness, a despair of life and its objects. When youth and a noble nature, beauty, spirit, truth, all that is estimable and loveable in woman could not preserve Agnes from such a fate, while miserable, narrow hearts and selfish lives prospered and grew, what was there to expect from such a chaos?

“An apathy that is natural to me,—I believe an absence of real objects and strong affections increased daily.

“It was in the Autumn of the same year I was invited by Lord Gresford, an old friend of my mother’s, to spend some time with him and his wife—he was not long married. I accordingly

arrived at Gresford Abbey ready, as one is apt to be, to find fault with my friend's new wife.

"She was a fine dark-eyed, generous-looking, intelligent woman, of a suitable age to her husband, lady-like, yet not conventionally well-bred. After dinner the conversation turned on continental politics, and one of the guests mentioned Switzerland and Chamouni. In my curiosity, I asked him had he visited the scene of the last summer's fatal accident, while in that locality. He replied in the affirmative, and was proceeding to describe it, when Lady Gresford burst into tears and left the room.

"Her husband explained to us that she was connected with, and warmly attached to the deceased lady, that she was convinced her death was voluntary, and could not hear it alluded to with composure.

"A few days after, when driving with Lady Gresford, she herself broached the subject, having heard from Gresford my early acquaintance with Agnes.



“What revelations she made of her endurance, her sufferings, though Agnes had not complained.

“It appeared to her that the death of poor Arthur, the brother I have mentioned, under circumstances of peculiar distress, quite broke her heart, and that her death was a deliberate act she had positive proof, for Agnes had written to her husband to that effect, as, after perusing the letter, he had insisted on the acquittal of the guide who was with her at the time of the catastrophe.

“Poor Lady Gresford’s warm heart appeared to grieve deeply for the loss of so much youth and fair promise. Yet strange as it may seem, her story raised an unaccountable distrust in my mind. I could not feel that Agnes was dead. In short, I did not think rationally. Yet after frequent conversations on the subject with Lady Gresford, who loved to revert to it, these wild imaginings subsided. What agonies of suffering must that beautiful, delicate, gentle girl have borne; in what depths of bitterness must she

have been steeped, before her woman's nature could learn to brave the physical terror of suicide. what despair of human help, what utter desolation must have nerved her.

"Great God!" exclaimed Colonel Leigh, walking up and down the room in the energy of his feelings, "it is fearful to think of; often have I cursed my own slackness and coldness that I had not found her out and persuaded her to fly with me from such misery. But no, she might seek refuge in death, when she would reject a lover. Yet could I have found her; *could I now restore her to life; with what rapture I would devote my own, to console, to soothe, to atone for the past.* For if my feelings formerly were vague and undefined, they are now deep, clear, unmistakable."

Colonel Leigh paused and leant from the window in thought, while I strove to still the wild beating of my heart which almost blinded me with its violence, at this most unexpected avowal.

"I parted with Lady Gresford reluctantly, to take the command of my regiment at Quebec," resumed Colonel Leigh, returning to his seat beside me.

"On the whole, I was glad to try a totally new scene, and looked forward to the sports and bracing atmosphere of Canada with some pleasure.

"Previous to my departure, my sister recalled to my mind the story of my father's old attachment to Madame Duch  nois; begged of me to call upon her, and myself deliver the letters with which she charged me.

"I obeyed; and the lapse of ages could not efface from my memory the astonishing effect your first tones produced upon me. I started eagerly forward, and Agnes Waring stood before me. Not, indeed, as I had seen her in her first bright youth, but as my own imagination had depicted her in mature though sorrowful beauty.

"Even through the natural awe with which we regard one whom we believed to have been dead,

I felt a thrill of rapture, a sudden confirmation of my unacknowledged irrational belief in her existence.

“But, alas! you undeceived me; you said you were not Agnes. You seemed terrified. I knew not what I said. Every tone and gesture, every attitude and sentiment, were those of the deceased—and then Madame Duchênôis called you Agnes. Even now, accustomed as I am to that marvellous resemblance, I feel my senses forsake me at times when I look at you; and were it not that Mrs. Longmore assures me you were with them in London, about the same time I remember the suicide took place, and your evident long acquaintance with Major Grahame’s family, nothing could shake my belief in your identity: as it is, I can never bring myself to call you by the name you bear, for if you be not my Agnes, the being you so marvellously seem, such seeming is—”

I know not what Colonel Leigh was about to add, for to my relief, the sound of approaching

voices and footsteps, made him pause abruptly, and as the door opened, he rose and moved quickly and impatiently to the window. Madame Duchênois, Mrs. Earle, and Eleanor, entered joyously; and full of apologies for their prolonged absence. The baby had been so interesting; and the mother's account of her hair-breadth 'scapes from slavery, so thrilling, there was no getting Madame away. "And then," said she, "our carriage broke down, and we had to walk such a long way home, so it is just as well, *mon enfant*, that you did not accompany us, for how should we have conveyed you back?"

I questioned in my own mind the degree of risk involved in an upset compared with the trying ordeal through which I had just past, with what degree of success I dared not venture to think.

"And we have left you so long alone, *chérie*," cried Eleanor, caressing me. "Can you forgive me?"

"Nay, I have not been quite alone," said I,

wondering Colonel Leigh had not spoken. "Colonel Leigh came in some time ago to write an important letter, and has been good enough to remain talking to me."

"Then we need not condole with you," cried Madame gaily: "but how have you been?"

"Why, suffering a good deal, so much that I must have been a dull companion. And now dear Eleanor, lend me your arm, I will go to my own room."

"Cannot I assist you more effectually?" said Colonel Leigh, coming forward.

"Do you go to one side and I will stay at the other," replied Eleanor for me. I had no option and thus aided soon reached my chamber.

Yet I had but a short time to indulge the suppressed emotion which shook my frame.

How little did I dream that Reginald Leigh had loved me—still loved me—or was it me he loved, and if so must I not shun him.

What agonising memories his story roused, and

what unutterable sweetness there was in his sympathy.

Well might he imagine that intense suffering and despair of human aid drove me to so desperate an act. But none could know, none could dream the torture of anticipating a long life of desolation, the corroding of daily, hourly hatred eating into the heart and poisoning its springs of thought and action. And then I wept gentle tears as I recalled his description of my mother, his kindly mention of poor Arthur; through all my fears and doubts, regrets and bitter memories, this strange outpouring of Reginald's heart had filled mine with a delicious dangerous sense of happiness.

But did he or did he not cherish his suspicions still? True he avowed Mrs. Longmore's admission that I was with her in London when the suicide took place, (and how she could make so great an error in time puzzled me), had set them at rest; probably he questioned her in

general terms. Nevertheless, I dreaded his following up the clue I had given him, by supplying the word "Ashbury;" certainly he did not seem to notice it at the time. So on the whole I hoped he would be convinced that I was not identical with Agnes Waring. Hoped, nay rather feared, for in spite of myself a strange contradictory longing would surge up from my heart, that he should know me—that I should have the rapture of speaking to him of myself. But his very avowals to me that day required a stricter incognito than ever. I started to my feet, forgetful of pain, in the distressing conflict of my thoughts, and then fearful that my absence would be remarked, prepared to appear at dinner.

Colonel Leigh was peculiarly silent and grave that evening. It was customary with him to be so; but since he came to Oakdale he had been gay, bright, animated.

I was determined to shew no signs of the deep struggle through which I had passed. It was a



great effort to seem as usual: nevertheless I managed it. Perhaps I over acted my part; certainly no one there imagined what an undertaking it was to sing and play Victor's favourite songs, and Mr. Earle's. Colonel Leigh did not ask me for any particular song: he sat near the piano, and though I dared not meet them, I felt his eyes were on me.

Eleanor had been charming us with one of her simple ballads, when the sound of laughter and voices announced an arrival, and immediately after Frank Dawson burst joyously into the room, glowing with the rapid pace at which he had ridden; and animated at finding himself amongst us again; he looked remarkably handsome. He had a cordial but hasty greeting for each; and making his way rapidly to me, seized my hand, and shaking it long and warmly, exclaimed,

"Ah! how is every inch of you, Mrs. Malcolm, and what's this I hear of your spraining your elegant little ankle? It's easy to see I was not

at Oakdale to take care of you. And now I may whistle for another dance with you!"

I replied gaily and cordially; for since I had found, that to him Arthur owed whatever of comfort sustained his miserable last moments, I had treated him with a degree of indulgent friendliness, on which, though far from presuming, he had naturally grown intimate and at ease.

"Mrs. Malcolm is nearly well," said Mrs. Earle, "and will be equal to a *contredanse* soon; but here are two new friends to introduce you to, Mr. Longmore."

"By Jupiter, Mr. Longmore and I are old acquaintances," interrupted Frank Dawson. "Didn't I see him land a salmon in such style, three months ago, that he has been my model of a fly-fisher ever since."

"I remember perfectly now," exclaimed Mr. Longmore, rising and grasping his hand. "And what a capital dinner I enjoyed at Liberty Hall, afterwards."

"Colonel Leigh," said Mrs. Earle, waiving her

hand towards that gentleman, when this recognition was over. I turned my eyes to him, to see how such antipodes would meet, and was positively startled to see the stern look of displeasure that darkened his fine face; he rose from his seat and made poor Frank Dawson a bow so stately and so frigid, that not even that light-hearted son of Erin could withstand it. He was momentarily subdued, but soon lit up again, and plunged into various droll excuses for not having been a more frequent visitor. "Sure, I've been besieged by a score of rascally 'habitans,'—begging your pardon, madame—but faith, they made no breach in the battlements of Liberty Hall; and at last, I asked them which they'd have, a good dinner and go about their business, or a stand-up fight: so after a little deliberation, they listened to reason—poor creatures, they are misguided and do not know what they want."

And Mr. Frank Dawson was carried off to supper, Mr. Longmore followed, and I continued to play at Madame's request. On the return of

the gentlemen, much loud and merry talk ensued, and it was not till I was about to retire for the night, that I missed Colonel Leigh.

"Where is the Colonel?" asked our host.

"Oh, he has got a headache, and is gone to bed," returned George Earle.

"Who is this Colonel?" enquired Mr. Dawson in a low tone.

"A great friend of Madame Duchênois."

"He's a wonderful grand snuff-the-moon of a fellow; one would think he never had anything under a Royal Highness introduced to him before: faith, I can tell him for all that, the Dawsons of Dawson Court, were—"

"Oh, don't mind his manner, Mr. Dawson, he improves on acquaintance."

"I hope so,"

"He is a very unpretending person, I assure you; a distinguished officer, too,"

"Stay!" cried Frank. "Is he the Colonel Leigh that came to the rescue of the poor old farmer, and beat off the three rascally Yankees?"

I bowed—"Faith, then he's a splendid fellow, though he needn't have bowed as much as to say, stand off."

"Pooh! nonsense, Mr. Dawson, don't be fanciful."

"Well, no matter; sure, its your own sweet self I'm thinking of: you're looking different, somehow."

"Come," said I, "if you are going to scrutinize my looks, I'll say good night."

The next day had been fixed for the departure of Mr. Longmore and Colonel Leigh, but they were easily persuaded to remain, as Mrs. Earle expected two sisters of Henry de Lille's, to spend some time with her, and held out all sorts of inducements in the shape of rides and dances.

"Besides," she added, "I want you to see two specimens of Canadian beauty, Colonel Leigh."

"That which I have already seen, is quite sufficient to impress me with a high idea of it," he returned, with a bow and smile to Eleanor, who blushed most becomingly.

"Ah! Miss Eleanor," cried poor Frank Dawson, who had just risen from breakfast, "don't mind what those deluding soldiers say; sure, they're used to slipping round the world with blarney."

Colonel Leigh looked coldly surprised for a moment; and then, too self-possessed to betray any ill humour, replied carelessly that, "wheels constantly in motion, required oil."

Henrietta and Delphine de Lille, were two bright brunettes, full of shy animation: ready to sing, dance, ride, or flirt—very innocent flirting—deeply enjoying society: to them, a rare pleasure.

They were orphans, and lived with a severe aunt, at Quebec.

I fully expected Frank Dawson to fall in love at once, with one or both; but he preserved his semi-platonic allegiance to myself.

Colonel Leigh handed in Henriette to dinner; and they seemed a good deal occupied with each other. While Frank, who sat beside me, took

the opportunity of telling me how much he had lost this harvest by the inattention of his people, or more truly, himself. It must have made a serious difference in his prospects, though he did not seem to care much for the matter; but I entered with sincere interest into the subject; read him a lecture, and discussed the means of pulling up.

After dinner, George Earle proposed a waltz, and I offered to play as long as they liked; not venturing yet to use my foot much.

Frank, with many loud lamentations over the loss of his accustomed partner, assisted me to the piano, and the dancers were soon in motion.

I did not see which they were; and as the music was not such as tasked my attention, my thoughts wandered soon away to the singular fact, that since our strange conversation had been broken in upon, the day before, I had not exchanged a word with Colonel Leigh, who was wont to be ever near. It might be better so; but I did not like it. Scarcely had the thought

glanced through my mind, when Colonel Leigh's voice startled me. "So Mr. Frank Dawson was more successful in persuading you to dance than Capt. Fielden."

He stood behind me so that I could not see his face. "Yes," I replied; "you know Oakdale and wedding festivities—Quebec and evening—are different things."

"Are they?" said he, so coldly and solemnly that I could not resist turning to look at him with a smile at the absurdity of his noticing such a trifle.

His sombre aspect struck me as being unaccountable, but as he met my eyes he smiled and coming round to the end of the piano, lent upon it facing me.

"I believe I am making myself supremely ridiculous," said he, good humouredly.

"No! why, what is the matter," I returned.

"Nothing but whim I fear. Tell me—is that Irishman an old acquaintance of yours?"

"Frank Dawson. Oh, no. I have no old acquaintances, at least, in Canada."



"He appears to be blest with a large amount of animal spirits."

"Yes! fortunately for himself—he is a warm-hearted, straightforward person."

"And the last I should imagine would be a favorite of yours," added Colonel Leigh, and paused; then bending forward he said in a low tone, "I have the same feeling of dread towards him."

"Ah, impossible!" I returned, hastily anxious to uphold poor Frank. "He is so very different, but as I met Colonel Leigh's eyes there was a mingled scrutiny and tenderness in their expression, that made me tremble, while the association of feeling his words betrayed, sent a sudden glowing wave of color to my cheek."

"I do not know what time that waltz is intended to keep," said Mr. Longmore, laughing, "but I know it is remarkably difficult to dance to. Come along, Colonel; it would be far better for you to be disporting yourself with us than interfering with the music; how can Mrs. Malcolm talk and play?"

"Ah! dear madame," cried Victor, "do try one little dance with me, I am sure you walked in from dinner quite well."

Colonel Leigh waited to hear my decision but I would not yield even to my favorite Victor. So Mr. Longmore carried off the offending Colonel, and I heard him ask Henriette to dance with him.

When I was at last released from the piano, there was a scheme under discussion to visit a curious subterranean stream at some distance from Oakdale, in the depths of the forest.

"Mrs. Malcolm, you must not fail to come with us, for a cave in the forest is quite a curiosity; but we have a mixture of mountain as well as wood which is not found in the western backwoods," observed Mr. Earle.

"You will be able to come, *ma bonne amie*," said Eleanor.

"I fear not—you know I cannot ride."

"Well! but there is the spring cart," shouted Victor vehemently.

"And I'll drive it as steadily as if I'd a life depending on every shake of it," added Frank Dawson in very audible tones.

"Thank you all a thousand times," said I, "but when arrived at our destination I should only be in the way; you had better leave me at home."

Chorus of "No, no."

"Mind, I'm to be your charioteer, Mrs. Malcolm," cried Frank.

"And luncheon can be conveyed in the spring cart at the same time," said Mrs. Earle, who was always thinking of the comfort of her guests.

"Then we'll have Mrs. Malcolm and the luncheon! What a classification," said Mr. Longmore, laughing.

"Faith I never thought I'd hear it from your lips," exclaimed Frank Dawson indignantly.

"Well then! you may dispose of me as you will, since you are so good as to wish for my society," said I, gratified at being made so much of.

"What hour do we start?" asked Mr. Longmore.

"Seven in the morning," replied Mr. Earle, "if it is not too early for you ladies: we have at least eighteen miles to travel, and over no easy road."

We all assured him we should be ready, and George left the room to give the necessary orders.

Mademoiselle de Lille sang some operatic airs, too difficult for so inexperienced an artist; Colonel Leigh listened in gloomy silence, and Frank Dawson chose to wisper a variety of absurdities into my ear, at which, in spite of the grave memories shining through the present and making my heart tremble for the future, I could not help smiling.

When Madame Duchênois and I retired, Colonel Leigh made me one of, what Frank Dawson called his snuff-the-moon bows, and made no attempt to say good night.

This childishness surprised me, and as I thought of it during the quiet night, the only

time I had for thought at Oakdale, the solution which presented itself—the natural supposition arising from his own words—was one that made my heart sink even while it vibrated to the wild sweet breezy gusts of happiness that swept over it—Reginald Leigh loved me!

Obscure as I was, doubtful as my position, he loved me, partly because in me he loved the memory—of who? myself—strange entanglement! But though he spoke gently, pityingly, of the dead Agnes, would he love the living woman who had forsaken her husband and broken her vows.

Yet he did me justice—with what a swelling of the heart I recalled his words, “No; Agnes might seek refuge in death when she would reject a lover;” and then his next sentence betrayed such a strange doubt as to my existence, I could not forget the emphasis with which he exclaimed, “Could I now restore her to life, with what rapture I would devote my own to console, to sooth, to atone for the past.”

Were these words meant to try me? or was it that he meant me to feel he knew me?

And for myself what was my part to be? how should I act? It was but too plain before me—that rugged path of duty. Not again must I shrink, not again desert the standard of truth. Yes! I must turn from this sweet dawn that was stealing with tremulous brightness upon the night of my existence. I must say to those soft golden gleams, already quivering over the dull grey clouded heart, “go hence!” and to the sweet thrilling tones of daybreak-music that whispered over the dark waters of my soul “Peace, be still! your glad notes are not, must not be for me.”

How bitter it was to think thus; but there was no escape—no room for self-deception—and I had never been loved before—never exercised the delicious power that woman sometimes wields over a mind, a will—stronger, firmer, better, ten thousand times than her own—that she fears yet plays with. I was fair, at least Regi-

nald said so, yet I had never known the rapture of feeling myself dear to a grand deep heart, where I could find warmth and shelter, rest and safety, and oh! above all, the unutterable relief and blessing of confidence to share the burden of my secret with another, and that other Reginald Leigh!

But I must not think of myself alone ; let me if possible save *him* pain. As yet his affection, if he did love me, must be but incipient; I was therefore, bound to discourage him; to show him a cold and equable seeming that would prove my heart could not be his.

*Ought* not to be his. But how had I forgotten myself; had I not worked enough evil already without further forgetting that I was still a wife!

I felt crushed, hopeless, resigned—yet humbly resolved to do my duty.

I cannot describe our visit to the subterranean river; no bright luminous outline, like that which my memory of our happy day at the “Lac de Belle Vue” presents, stands out against the

pale, ashen, sorrowful hue; wherewith my soul was tinged. It was a day of unmitigated pain to me; yet the sun shone as bright, the air was as bracing, the flowers as luxuriant, the woods as redolent of perfume, as when last I rode through them.

Colonel Leigh was watchful of me; he suggested that Mr. Earle would be the best person to act as my charioteer, and I felt strongly tempted to let it be so, but Frank Dawson grew so noisy and declamatory on the subject, that I was glad to let him have his way; besides, must I not carry out my intention to mislead Colonel Leigh? mislead but not disgust. No! I could not bear to destroy the fair image he had enshrined in his imagination—myself idealized. Nevertheless his proud disdain of poor Frank nettled me: it showed an unsound mind, to condemn what was good, because it was not elegant.

During our journey to the Cave, he never came near nor addressed me; he rode with Mrs. Earle, while Mademoiselle de Lille, George, and Victor,



formed a noisy group round my conveyance; and I no doubt, passed as one of the gayest amongst them, to those not near me.

When at last arrived at our destination, I was quite worn out, and begged them to leave me with Mrs. Earle, at the entrance of the cavern. To this, all demurred; and rather than delay them, with difficulty clinging to the stout arm of my kind host, I crawled far enough to see the dark currents, and hear the solemn mystic murmur of the subterranean waters.

The dark damp atmosphere chilled and oppressed me. I was glad to return to the light and warmth of upper air.

Our banquet was a merry one; healths were drank and speeches made, but I listened as in a dream. I sat pale, silent, abstracted, striving at times to chime with the tone of those around me.

At last Mr. Earle announced that we must return, and the gay party broke up into groups assisting to pack up the remnants of the feast;

---

to gather flowers; to revel in the exuberance of light hearts and unchecked spirits. I was therefore a few moments alone; then Colonel Leigh who had been standing apart drew near, and seating himself on a mossy stone a little lower than where Mr. Earle had placed me raised his dark thoughtful eyes to mine. I could not turn away. I felt fascinated.

"This has been anything but a day of pleasure to you. It was imprudent to venture. Is your foot very painful?"

"My foot! Oh, no, not when I stay quiet."

"I fear your Jehu was not so steady as he promised. Tell me. What can you see in that noisy Irishman?"

I could not help smiling at the species of candid vexation with which this was asked.

"I see a great deal of good which you would also perceive, only you have allowed some prejudice against him to take possession of your mind."

"Yet I am not in general easily prejudiced."

"My acquaintance with you, Colonel Leigh, is so short, I cannot venture to judge."

He turned his eyes to mine enquiringly—doubtingly.

"I have not exchanged a word with you since you listened to my story—was it not a strange one?"

"Most sad," I returned, resolved to speak steadily.

"Yes, you felt it, I saw that; but you have quick sympathies, and I too—I know every change of feeling, every light and shade that sweeps across your face."

A mingled thrill of delight and terror shivered through my veins at these words. I looked round for some excuse to break off the conversation, but no one was near. I dared not look towards Colonel Leigh for I felt his eyes sought mine.

"I am more of a theorist than you think," he resumed as I did not speak. "Let me drive you home, and we will discuss the question of sympathy, more fully."

But I was determined to carry out the stern resolutions I had made in my own chamber. "Thank you," said I, hesitatingly, "but I fear it would hardly do to dismiss Mr. Dawson; you know he, from the first, elected himself my charioteer"—and I broke down awkwardly.

"Not another word," said Colonel Leigh, over whose brow a dark cloud swept, and was then by a strong effort, dismissed; "I see my indiscretion: you must not incur Mr. Dawson's displeasure;" and then in a totally changed tone, he began to talk of the scenery, the manners of the people, &c., but all in a rapid careless way, till catching Mr. Longmore's eye, he seemed to recognize some wish on that gentleman's part to speak to him, and left me. I knew that I had done right; yet I felt intensely miserable. I was determined not to return with Frank Dawson, and took an opportunity to ask him to resign his place to Mr. Earle.

"Now what do you want to get rid of me for?"

“ I do not want to get rid of you ; I want to talk to Mr. Earle.”

“ Well then, Mrs. Malcolm, sure, I'd do more than that for you ; though what more I could do than give you up, it's hard to say !”

“ Console yourself with either of those pretty little Canadians !”

“ Is it me ? Ah ! you're laughing at me.” But to my relief, he assented ; for though I must not encourage Colonel Leigh, at least I need not disgust him ; and this arrangement would prove that, although I objected to a *tête à tête* drive with him, it was not that I preferred Frank Dawson — poor, thoughtless, good-natured Frank. How could Reginald credit so wild an idea ?

But whether he noticed the arrangement or not, it was impossible to say : he neither approached nor spoke to us during the trajet. I was right glad when the day was over.

The next brought letters which Colonel Leigh said compelled his return to Quebec. And after

•

a brief leave taking he started, accompanied by Mr. Longmore and Frank Dawson.

"You must both put up at Liberty Hall, for the night," said Frank "and push on in the morning."

"Thank you," returned Colonel Leigh coldly; "I must reach Quebec as soon as possible, and will leave Mr. Longmore with you."

We were all assembled in the general sitting room, before the parting guests had mounted their horses.

"My dear Colonel," cried Madame Duchênois, "you surely do not mean to ride alone after night fall to Quebec, after the escape you have had already; it would be madness."

"Because it is an improbable sort of thing to do, therefore I am less likely to be molested," he returned with a smile.

"Nevertheless it would not be wise," said Mr. Earle.

"You would not hear of it, I am sure," said I in a low tone to Mr. Longmore. He turned a

gay glance on me, shook his head and whispered "of course not, make your mind easy."

I was silent and annoyed with myself; and Mr. Longmore continued aloud, "And does no one suppose I am in a hurry back to my wife! I can tell you I don't mean to draw rein till I am in my own domicile, come—to horse, gentlemen, to horse!"

An unwonted gloom seemed to me to settle over Oakdale after they had left. There was laughter and the sound of melody; but to me all was dark, I began to long for a return to my settled employments, to my pupils, to my duties, in short I yearned to be at Quebec; then I examined into this yearning and determined that it was mere restlessness; for that, as I had so deeply offended Colonel Leigh, it was impossible I could look forward to seeing much of him.

There was now a visible change in the weather, and Madame became anxious to return before the frost and snow set in. Of course her wishes were hospitably opposed; every one was grieved to part

with us, and I felt that come what might, I had a haven at Oakdale.

But I was in no mood to look forward. A deep darkness lay upon me, a darkness that might be felt.

It was a fortnight after Colonel Leigh's departure that we took ours, amid many promises to return, to write, to remember. As soon as her cousins left, Eleanor was to come to Madame for a month or two.

Our journey back was to me very different from that to Oakdale. Already the thickly falling leaves betokened the coming winter, while to me a new page of life had been unfolded.

Again we rested at Liberty Hall, and I fancied its owner looked less joyous than usual, but I was too dull to question him.

It was very pleasant to be once more in our own abode, to feel that I could employ myself usefully, busily, and thus shut out thought. Dear Madame Duchênôis, too, was the better for our six



weeks in the country, nevertheless she was glad to be in her own home again.

It was now two years since I had landed in Canada; solemnly did I review the passages of my life, and vow the remainder of it to God; I strove to brace myself up, to silence the deep yearnings for a love, I must reject; and so almost feverishly to be up and doing, I started the morning after our arrival, to see Catherine and Lady L. and announce my return to my pupils.

Mrs Longmore embraced me warmly, "How glad I am to get you back!" I was afraid from what Mr. Longmore told me it would be very difficult to win you from Oakdale. Will you dine with us to-day? Colonel Leigh and your old admirer, Captain Alexander, are to be with us."

"No, dear Catherine, I cannot leave Madame."

"Nonsense! you do not choose to come."

"I assure you it would not be right to leave her; but call at the Château yourself and you will see."

“And what are you going to do, look for pupils again?”

“Certainly, I want to make a fortune while I can.”

“Well, I have two or three new ones for you.”

Lady L. was out, but two or three other friends hailed my return very flatteringly, and next week promised to be a busy one, I resolved to fill up my time systematically and leave no vacant moments for weakening reverie.

I heard on my return, with a strange mixture of satisfaction and regret that Colonel Leigh had called, and sat a long time with Madame.

I was writing in my own room and could not be disturbed on the occasion of his next visit, so it was more than ten days after our return that we met for the first time, at Mrs. Longmore's one evening.

Captain Alexander was also there. I had an instinctive dislike to this man, and though he evidently admired me, I also instinctively felt that a thin barrier separated his liking from hatred.

He was a self sufficient sneering person, and I think suspected me, I know not of what, but he had been in London, and much with the Grahame's all the time they first engaged me, so perhaps he had gathered some slight whisper of my mysterious advent; it made me uneasy to see him on terms of intimacy with Colonel Leigh, but, I was anxious to stand well with him, or rather not to provoke him, as I knew my haughty rejection of his advances on our outward passage rankled in his mind; I therefore made no attempt to escape from him, though he talked to me perseveringly the whole evening, in a strain anything but interesting, for he was a would-be fine gentleman.

Colonel Leigh scarcely addressed me, he played chess with an old engineer officer in spectacles, nevertheless he offered me his arm when we were leaving, and told me I had left my roses behind at Oakdale. "You have not asked me for Fielden," he said, "which is the more ungrateful as he is one of the warmest of your numerous admirers, but '*Les absens*,'" you know the rest. He spoke

in a careless reckless way, as though he had de-throned me, from the species of elevation on which he always seemed to place me. I was cut to the heart, and determined not to accept his judgment of me.

“Do not assume such a tone with me, Colonel Leigh,” said I proudly, yet sadly, “my mourning dress should tell you it is unsuitable.”

“Unsuitable!” he repeated, “By——I do not know what evil spirit possesses me to offend you; I am almost insane with the effort to comprehend what is incomprehensible; a word or two alone with you would solve much, undeserving as I am of so great a favour, a favour to which I have no shadow of right, will you grant it?”

I did not for a moment shrink, yet every word was laden with despair as I coldly replied, “You and I can have nothing to say to each other that might not be said before Madame Duchênnois, therefore you must unravel whatever puzzles you without my assistance.”

“I cannot misunderstand you,” he said,

“so trust me, I will unravel the secret, and alone.”

I had my foot on the step of the carriage as he spoke, and as he took my hand to assist me to my seat, he pressed it so tightly that it positively pained me. There was temper, determination, antagonism, in that strong grasp. My heart bounded indignantly; but the next moment, under the pretext of arranging Madame's cloak, he leant across her, and before I was aware, took my hand and carried it gently to his lips with a glance that asked pardon—a glance that cost me a night's rest before I could regain the resolution it disturbed.

One of the pupils Mrs. Longmore introduced me to was a fair delicate girl, daughter to the General commanding in Quebec, and as her health would not permit her to attend my class, I gave her lessons at her own house.

She was an interesting fragile creature, not pretty, but in my opinion attractive. She was

an only daughter, and report said she would have a large fortune.

Emmeline Harcourt had rarely been contradicted in any way. She was gentle, but incapable of exertion, and I think, from education and indulgence, slightly selfish. Yet I soon felt a degree of kindness towards this weak being.

Her mother was a proud cold woman, one of a mercantile family, who had by frequent intermarriages become partially aristocratic. The General was a perfect specimen of a high bred irascible martinet.

The contrasts of this family amused me. I was slightly nettled at times by the indescribable air of condescension with which Mrs. Harcourt used to address me; but I was too well established to notice it much. I could afford to smile. I found the daughter mild, intelligent, refined.

Winter was now fast approaching, and I settled steadily into a busy routine. Monsieur and

Madame de Lille paid us a flying visit *en route* to Oakdale ; both appearing so calmly happy, that it was a rest to the heart to look upon them. Henri was more admirable as a husband than as a lover, and Marie, had an air of perfect repose and gentle dignity that suited her admirably.

The second evening they were with us, Madame Duchênôis collected a few friends—it was a week after I had met Colonel Leigh at Mrs. Longmore's, and we had not spoken since.

He came in uniform, which he rarely wore, and looked gayer than usual.

I was talking with Mr. Longmore and old Sir Harry L—, when he arrived; and as he was immediately presented to Marie, and entered into a long and apparently interesting conversation with her, it was some time before he approached me.

“The bride is a charming little creature,” he said, seating himself beside me; “and I like young de Lille: they rather come up to my idea of man and wife—each supplying and perfecting

the other; both profoundly at rest, feeling they have all that is needful. The world may sneer at all this, but there's truth in it!"

"There is indeed," said I, sighing and speaking dreamily.

"And," resumed Colonel Leigh, "it makes me envious, at least, I honestly confess I am growing old enough or weak enough to wish for a house and a heart to myself!"

"Thank heaven," I returned, trying to speak gaily, "there are plenty of kind and true hearts to be found, let sceptics say what they will; so you may suit yourself, Colonel Leigh, as servants express themselves."

He looked at me in a sort of displeased surprise; and after a short pause, he resumed:

"You must miss Mr. Frank Dawson's animating flow of spirits. Does he never visit Quebec?"

"I do miss him," I returned, "and fear he seldom comes to the town."

"Do you know," exclaimed Colonel Leigh, with another total change of tone and subject,



"I was dining with a pupil of yours, to day—I mean Miss Harcourt—her father is a sort of relative of mine. They were speaking of you for some time before I found out who they meant. Is it not intensely tiresome to give lessons?"

"No; I do not dislike it, it is an occupation."

"Yes, and as to the position of a teacher you are so ineffably superior to every species of falsity, you are quite indifferent on this score?"

"Quite, indeed," said I, yet shrinking a little from his praise.

"And your pupil; I am somewhat interested in her character; has it escaped tolerably from the system of selfish indulgence in which she has been brought up?"

I replied that I thought Miss Harcourt gentle and amiable in no common degree.

Colonel Leigh made no answer, and seemed absorbed in thought, until Mr. Longmore joined us, and asked him his opinion of Madame de Lille. The reply was an enthusiastic eulogium mixed with playfully expressed envy.

"Why, you lazy fellow," said Mr. Longmore, "there's her sister still to be had, why do you not try for her. I think you'd have a chance. Don't you, Mrs. Malcolm?"

"If I said so," I returned, "it would be admitting too much."

"Very true," rejoined Mr. Longmore.

Colonel Leigh said nothing, but looked earnestly and enquiringly into my eyes. I spent some precious moments endeavouring to interpret that glance.

His last words to me that evening were, "your friend Mr. Dawson is in town, I saw him yesterday."

"Oh, impossible!" I exclaimed; "he would have been sure to have called."

"I could not have been mistaken, and I fear he has fallen in with a well-known gambler; he was walking arm in arm with him; if so, he will be a victim. Good night."

I was sorry to hear such news, but I soon dismissed the idea, satisfied that Colonel Leigh was mistaken.

A few days after I was giving my usual lesson to Miss Harcourt, she was indisposed, and unequal to exertion.

"Let me come to-morrow, or next day," said I; "you are not inclined to sing to-day."

"If you will be so very good," she returned, "and give me the rest of your time in conversation, it will do me good."

I assented, and the moments flew rapidly by. Miss Harcourt was much interested in my description of Oakdale and its inhabitants.

"What would I not give to pay a visit to so charming a place," she exclaimed. "It must be so new, so fresh, everything there, and I am weary of sameness. If you were not my teacher I would be sick of learning to sing."

"Then I daresay idleness is at the root of your indisposition to-day," said I, smiling. "Nevertheless I think Oakdale would brace you up. The very perfume of the woods and the rush of the river sends a thrill of vigorous life down every vein, as Colonel Leigh used to say."

“Colonel Leigh,” repeated Miss Harcourt, a faint colour stealing over her pale cheek—“you know him; was he at Oakdale?”

“Yes, for a short time.”

Miss Harcourt looked out of the window for a few minutes, and then turning to me, asked had I known Colonel Leigh long.

“I met him last summer at Madame Duchênnois,” I returned evasively. “He is, you know, the son of her oldest friend.”

“Indeed!” Another pause. “Mrs. Malcolm, do you not think him a most extraordinary person?”

“No. He is agreeable—probably has more than common ability; but I do not think him extraordinary.”

Miss Harcourt smiled very sweetly. “But then I know him better—we are cousins—and I remember him since I was a child.”

I smiled to myself at the idea of her “knowing him better.” She went on.

“He was always the same, kind and obliging,

but never seemed to care for any one. He was quite surprised, he said, to find me grown into a tall fair woman when we arrived here. Do you not think he would have a great horror of an heiress, he is so proud?"

It was evident this poor child had let her fancy dwell on Reginald Leigh, till she had persuaded herself that a dread of seeming a fortune hunter, alone prevented him from declaring himself, for Miss Harcourt was, for many reasons, too much courted to doubt her own powers of attraction.

I replied vaguely; but she followed up the subject as if fascinated by it. A thousand little incidents were detailed, professedly to illustrate some peculiarity in his character, but really, as I soon perceived, to elicit some conjecture from me touching the feelings that induced them.

It was evident what sugared dainties Miss Harcourt was in the habit of receiving from her *confidantes*. But from me she heard truth. I could not deceive her, for however eligible such

a match might seem in the world's eye, it was one which Colonel Leigh would never dream of; and while I sat thus thinking and half listening to poor Miss Harcourt's long account of some handing down to dinner, or into a carriage, we heard approaching footsteps, and Mrs. Harcourt entered, followed by the subject of our conversation. My pale pupil looked undone. Mrs. Harcourt stopped suddenly, and after a short greeting to me, said, rather stiffly,

"I thought your lesson was over, Emmeline, as I did not hear the piano, so I told Colonel Leigh I would venture to introduce him to your boudoir, and you would sing something just to show how you are improving with Mrs. Malcolm."

As her daughter was still speechless, and I had acknowledged Colonel Leigh, I replied to her.

"Miss Harcourt has not taken her lesson to-day, she did not feel equal to it, and we have sat talking here instead; however, on Thursday we are to make up for lost time."

“Oh! thank you!” returned Mrs. Harcourt. “Well then, Emmy, you will be better able to sing now; come, my love, Colonel Leigh is an old friend you know.”

“It is impossible I could sing unless Mrs. Malcolm plays for me,” she replied tremulously, “and even—Oh! I never could!”

“Pray do not refuse” said Colonel Leigh gently; “you will kindly play for Miss Harcourt will you not,” he added turning quickly to me, as I stood ready to go away.

“If she thinks it will be of any use to her,” I replied.

“Will you begin,” exclaimed Mrs. Harcourt rather ungraciously. I drew off my gloves and sat down, but Miss H. insisted on my choosing her song, and when I had suggested half a dozen, decided on one rather beyond her compass of voice, which though sweet was weak and low. I never heard her to such disadvantage; I was obliged more than once to sustain her notes, by throwing

in my own, a gratuitous exertion for which Mrs. Harcourt thanked me by observing she did not think it was a duet.

"Oh! no, Mamma," cried Emmeline, "it was only to help me, Mrs. Malcolm put in a note or two."

I now rose to leave, but Mrs. Harcourt begged me not to go so soon, and asked me if a Canadian winter was not a terrible ordeal, "I quite dread it," she concluded.

"I rather enjoy the dry clear cold," said I, "and have often suffered more from winter in England."

"Yes, by the way you are not long here yourself, Lady L. tells me; I know some people of your name in the North of England, a Colonel Malcolm, his wife was a Miss Gascoigne, niece of Lord Gascoigne, any relation of yours?"

"None," said I quietly, "my relations are not aristocratic."

"What part of England are you from?" she persisted with more determination than good breeding; I felt slightly uncomfortable, though



certain, that if anything would induce Reginald to turn a deaf ear to his own suspicions it would be the ungenerous prying of another.

"London was my *locale*," I returned carelessly, as I fastened my fur round my throat.

"Indeed," said Mrs. Harcourt. "I always fancied from your name and your intimacy with the Grahames, that you were Scotch."

"I suppose all Malcolms were originally from the North countrie," I rejoined. "And now as the fog is closing in, I must leave you. The day after to-morrow then, Miss Harcourt!"

"Let me see you home," said Colonel Leigh, rising at the same time. I fancied Mrs. Harcourt looked aghast by the dim light.

"I thank you," I replied, in some embarrassment; "I cannot think of taking you out of your way. I can reach home very safely."

"I think more safely under my escort," said he, very decidedly.

"I assure you I—"

"Well, at all-events, I, too, must leave. I

have to see Sir——, in the Citadel at five o'clock."

We accordingly left the house together. Col. Leigh offered me his arm. I hesitated; he drew my hand through it.

"So I have to thank Mrs. Harcourt for a *tête à tête* walk," said he, after we had walked a few paces in silence, "though I assented reluctantly enough to go listen to poor Emmeline's singing. I fear my cousin's *cara sposa* is an ill-bred woman. I was distressed at her pertinacious queries."

"I did not mind them in the least."

"No: I saw that; and it puzzled me not a little."

"You are frank," said I, in an offended tone.

"Why should I not? you occupy too many of my thoughts, not to be at all-times, an object to be observed and studied."

"But it is not pleasant to be watched and suspected. By what right do you assume such a tone?"

"I have a strong right," he returned, with a

deep sigh, "the right of deep sincere interest—personal interest."

I made the necessity of gathering up the skirt of my dress, an excuse for withdrawing my arm. How was I to reply?—my head swam—we were near the corner of a side street—and while I walked hastily on, a rough dog ran round it, stopped a moment in uncertainty, and then sprang on me with a joyous bark. I was startled and already unnerved. I suddenly caught Col. Leigh's arm in my fright: though the next moment I recognized Frank Dawson's favourite dog "Shaun."

"Down, down," said the Colonel pushing the animal back. He ran off and almost immediately two gentlemen arm-in-arm turned quickly up the street, in the same direction we were going, and without seeing us. One I saw directly was Captain Alexander, the other was wrapped in a loose coat, but from the walk, and still more in the presence of Shaun, I could not help thinking he was Frank Dawson.

"You are undoubtedly a coward," said Colonel Leigh smiling. "Victor was quite right, yet I think there is courage in your heart somewhere. The dog seemed to know you?"

"Yes," said I confusedly, "it certainly is Frank Dawson's dog."

"Ha!" returned Colonel Leigh; "I told you he was in Quebec."

"I fancied he was one of those gentlemen who have just gone on; the other was Captain Alexander."

"Ah! another of the gambling set."

"Indeed; I always had an instinctive horror of him."

"Had you," said Reginald, turning to look at me. "Yet he is an older acquaintance than anyone here except—" he paused.

"Mrs. Longmore," I put in. "Yes, nevertheless I do not like him."

"Will you tell me then," asked my companion suddenly, "why you do like Mr. Frank Dawson?"

"Because I know one or two traits of his


character that show worth; because I owe him a debt of gratitude I would risk much to repay," I returned with no small warmth, anxious to put an end to the subject.

"Surely you must have known him before in England," exclaimed Colonel Leigh surprised.

"I will not permit Mrs. Harcourt or yourself to catechise me," said I firmly. "Let us speak of something else," and I hastily proceeded to tell him all the news I could remember of Oakdale, while he remained silent; at last to my infinite relief we reached my destination, and I bid him a hurried good-bye, glad to be so well over this dangerous *tête-à-tête*.

This interview cost me some reflection. I could not doubt that deeper feelings than mere curiosity actuated Colonel Leigh in his endeavour to unravel the mystery that surrounded me.

Again and again I resolved to save him as much as possible, to avoid him, and to mislead him, as concerned my identity. For if I was simply an unknown and doubtful personage, he



would never think of me as a wife. And thus arguing I seemed to derive strength from the cruel necessity which bid me turn from the delicious draught of happiness sparkling as I fancied at my lips, and plunge myself into the bitterness of eternal separation. "At least," I whispered, "it is my own doing, and even while I seek to save from the pain I endure, I see that I could be all and all to him."

Yes, there is a wondrous power in feeling that one is or might be loved—a treasure voluntarily resigned and a treasure withheld—how different the effect! one elevating and consoling, the other depressing and mortifying, with a cankering regret you yet will not acknowledge even to yourself.

We were now anticipating the daily arrival of Eleanor Earle for her promised visit, and I was impatient she should come, I wished to diminish as much as possible the chances of another *tête à tête* with Colonel Leigh.

His visits to Madame were generally in the

evening; sometimes he would read aloud, sometimes listen to me, but whether speaking or silent, he seemed to take his place in the salon with a sort of "at homeism" singularly pleasant.

A lull appeared to have hushed our communications into quiet common place for more than a week after I had met him at Mrs. Harcourts, which I was most willing should last. In it my apprehensions slumbered and I could taste the extraordinary pleasure of hearing his voice, and dreaming the dreams, and seeing the visions it recalled.

At last dear Eleanor came under the care of a stalwart brother, who intended proceeding to Montreal; she was slightly weary, having made the whole journey in one day: and rather excited on finding she was to appear at a large party the next evening.

Mr. Longmore had especially invited her, and she soon became reconciled to the idea.

I was vividly reminded of my own first ball, by the sort of nervous delight with which this

young wood nymph consulted me about her dress and its accessories, as the eventful hour approached. I entered warmly into her feelings; assisted her toilette, and was delighted with the result of my exertions.

There was a buoyancy, a grace, an indescribable freshness in her look and air, that suggested the idea of eglantine and wild roses—all was so young, so pure, so instinct with life, and hope, and happiness, that, involuntarily, I sighed as I contrasted my own fuller, taller form, pensive face, and pale brown hair, with her glowing cheek and dark lustrous tresses.

There was no secret here to veil the eye, and measure the words, and check the impulse; and I felt deep in my inmost soul, how terrible it is for a woman not to have a fresh unsullied heart, a spotless life, a free unburthened conscience, to bestow on the man she loves. There was not a word that fell from Eleanor's lips, that did not indicate a lofty soul—but how simple and unconscious of its loftiness. As I looked on her



and listened, Mr. Longmore's words came into my mind, the words he had addressed to Colonel Leigh: "Why do you not try for the sister?"

Why not, indeed! Was not this the very being that might charm him and make him happy? and if so, what was I? Ought I for a moment to wish otherwise?

A tide of bitterness closed over me darkly at the thought; I could see no more clearly; so I hastened to laugh and talk with Eleanor.

We were late in reaching Mr. Longmore's; we had stayed too long talking over our coffee with Madame, who did not accompany us, and nearly all the guests had arrived. The usual buzz of conversation, above which the music rose occasionally in loud strains, reached our ears as we ascended the stairs, and then we were immersed in the talking crowd, the warm perfumed atmosphere, the sort of bewildering which attacks a novice in such scenes. I felt Eleanor shrink as our names were announced, and was by no means pleased myself, as I had begged the

servant to let Mrs. Longmore know we were there quietly; he, however, could not leave the beaten track, and I was greatly relieved when Mr. Longmore appeared, and after a kindly welcome, led us to his wife. She soon introduced a partner to my fair *debutante*, and I was almost as speedily joined by Captain Alexander. As usual, I was compelled to converse where I would fain have remained coldly silent; moreover, the sight of him reminded me of poor Frank Dawson, but I did not venture to question him. There was a pale vindictive expression in his face that suggested the idea of a vampire fresh from a victim.

His conversation was easy enough, though he seasoned it with a greater amount of ambiguously expressed admiration than I at all relished. I could not refrain from replying with a certain degree of hauteur, especially as I observed Colonel Leigh had passed me once or twice as if waiting to speak to me; at last he drew near, and after exchanging a few remarks said he was glad

to see Miss Earle among the dancers, adding, "she looks like a wood violet, or anything else that is peculiarly fresh and reviving, among our determined party goers."

So he looked upon me seven years before; how could I suppose I could retain the charm still.

"Pon my word, Colonel! you are not very complimentary," observed Captain Alexander.

"You understand me," said Reginald, quietly raising his eyes to mine. I smiled.

"You understand each other, that's tolerably clear," continued Captain Alexander, with a laugh.

Colonel Leigh replied by asking if the Harcourts had come, in that tone of calm disdain, that totally destroys an attempted impertinence.

"Yes, by Jove!" exclaimed the other. "I've been undergoing a regular cross-examination from Madame *Mère* about you, Mrs. Malcolm."

"Indeed!"

"It is a pity Mrs. Harcourt did not address

her queries to herself," said Colonel Leigh, addressing me.

"Why you see," resumed Captain Alexander, "she heard some how that I had come out with you and the Grahames, and she wanted to know if you had been long acquainted, so——"

"Ah!" said I, carelessly and rising, "you ought to have referred her to Mrs. Longmore or to me. I will go and look for her, for Miss Harcourt said the other day that her mother wished to speak with me," and I took Colonel Leigh's arm, scarce knowing what I did.

"To be sure I had very little to tell," persisted Captain Alexander, "for I remember I dined with Grahame and his wife in London the very day they first saw you, and that was two years ago last July, and we never met till on board the —— on our voyage out."

"Come out on the lobby, the heat is too much for you," said Colonel Leigh.

"No, thank you; I do not feel it, and I must find Eleanor," I replied, nerving myself to be firm.

"Well, I am going to ask Miss Harcourt to dance," said my antagonist, as I had grown to consider Captain Alexander; "she has been keeping herself up all the evening, waiting for you, I fancy, Colonel—you're the luckiest fellow in garrison."

"My cousin, Miss Harcourt, is delicate, and cannot dance as much as your general style of partners, Captain Alexander," said Reginald contemptuously, and turning away from him. "You have too much patience with that man," he added, as we got out of hearing, "why do you not crush him."

I was attempting to reply, when Eleanor, sparkling from the dance, joined us, and I was saved further embarrassment.

I took advantage of this respite to place myself near Lady L. Eleanor was soon again carried away to dance, and Colonel Leigh also disappeared.

"Well, my dear, I have scarcely had a glimpse of you since you returned from the wilds, what have you been doing?"

"My business," said I smiling.

"Pooh, pooh, you were never formed for business. So our great and grand Colonel ran after you to Oakdale, what do you intend doing with him, my dear?"

"Lady L., I cannot understand you; Colonel Leigh and Mr. Longmore are renowned anglers, and Oakdale boasts first rate fishing; pray think before you speak, such careless words might do me a great injury."

"Don't be so solemn about it, I never get any one into a scrape, but I am glad to hear you speak so coolly on the subject, for the report in Quebec is, that he is to be married in a month or six weeks to Miss Harcourt, a very nice match, though old Mrs. Otterson says he'll make a wretched husband; I don't think so; yes, there they are, going to dance. He is certainly a noble looking creature. They say he has broken a perfect museum of hearts, &c.," and Lady L. rattled on, while I sat meditating on her remarks about Reginald. What! were his attentions to me noticed, and was I al-

ready to be pitied as a "person" forgotten and deserted for a more wealthy and suitable match, a silly moth to be warned off the flame by an open mouthed retailer of gossip like Lady L.

I did not doubt or blame Reginald, but I loathed my own folly and weakness, in permitting myself to be drawn from the obscurity most suitable to my painful clouded position, and thus encountering dangers which would never have reached me in retirement; steadily I resolved never to mix in society again, except where it consisted of private friends; Eleanor might accompany Madame, I would stay at home.

I presume Lady L. found me rather a dull companion for she soon took the arm of some passing acquaintance and strolled away.

But my annoyances were not yet over.

The seat beside me was not long vacant before Mrs. Harcourt came up, and after a more than usually cordial greeting took possession of it.

"Miss Harcourt is dancing, I hope she is quite herself again," said I in the first pause in her

account of a letter she had had from her cousin the Marchioness of Bucklesbury.

"She is pretty well, thank you, I was afraid of her dancing too much, but we could not refuse Colonel Leigh."

Good Heavens, I thought, struck by her significant tone, can there be any truth in Lady L.'s report. I felt a strange coldness steal over my heart as I bowed in reply. "By the way," she continued, "I have been anxious to tell you how much I approved of your conduct the other day, the day you met Colonel Leigh at my house I mean," seeing me look bewildered; "you were quite right to refuse his offer to see you home, only, excuse me, you should have been more firm; it is really no advantage to a young widow like yourself to be seen walking with a man of his reputation."

"Madam," said I, now thoroughly roused, "I presume Colonel Leigh has the reputation of being a gentleman, therefore I cannot see how his attendance can be of any disadvantage to a lady; but however ready I may be, from other



reasons, to dispense with it, I shall be guided in my conduct towards him as towards other gentlemen, by the *bienseances* of society and my own judgment."

"Of course, of course," exclaimed Mrs. Harcourt, rather surprised at my tone. "I merely spoke for your own good; persons meeting you, might put an evil interpretation on what was innocent—perhaps misrepresent Colonel Leigh to my daughter—and as no one here has any acquaintance with your family and previous position, you do not receive that deference to which no doubt you are entitled."

"This," said I, in a low tone, "is the first time anyone has failed in it. I do not ask for more than I deserve—simply the respect due to an educated gentlewoman of unblemished character. This I will have; and I dare anyone to withhold it."

So saying, I arose and left her.

The rest of that evening was anything but pleasure to me—how cruelly I had been wounded!

how the shaft rankled in my heart. What! was I to be watched, and catechised, and judged?—by whom, my inferiors! I felt within me powers that raised me far above them. But this was nothing; surely there must be some truth in the report of Colonel Leigh's engagement to Miss Harcourt, or her mother would not have spoken as she did: and if so, what an unsuitable marriage. I could bear to see him Eleanor's husband, but not poor feeble Emmeline Harcourt's.

I know not what I said or did that night. I remember old Sir Harry L——, my former acquaintance, Captain Fielden, and several others, standing round and applauding the wild, bitter, and scornful things I said. I remember Colonel Leigh, at length, informing me that Eleanor was ready to go; and at last it was over.

"Take my arm," said Colonel Leigh hastily, and looking disturbed and annoyed. I obeyed him involuntarily, and he led me rapidly to a small room below, where our cloaks and shawls were left; Eleanor did not join me immediately, and Colonel Leigh placing me in a sheltered position

near the fire, exclaimed in a low tone, "have you been speaking with Mrs. Harcourt?" I bowed. "And has she not been guilty of some stupid impertinence? I have been in an agony of impatience for the last half hour, for she has presumed to lecture me, too, and I dread her remarks having wounded you; pray be candid."

"Colonel Leigh! Mrs. Harcourt could not wound me, it would take a stronger and more skilful hand to penetrate the defence of my self esteem; but though a rude preceptress she has taught me a wholesome lesson."

"What do you mean!"

"I mean that however really Mrs. Harcourt's equal, I place myself in a false position by mingling in scenes too gay, too public for one alone in the world, widowed, and deeply tried; there is no place for me, and the gay, the prosperous, resent the intrusion of a gloomy worker, in their bright assemblages, as birds reject some feathered stranger of an unknown tribe; I have therefore seen the last of Quebec gaieties."

Colonel Leigh was silent for a moment his large

dark eyes fixed firmly on mine, his cheek flushed while I felt my heart throb, and my lip quiver, tho' I spoke calmly. "You are deeply and justly offended," said Colonel Leigh at last, "but unless I am greatly mistaken in you, you are not the woman to be led away by morbid feeling, and shut yourself from the innocent pleasures of society, where you are loved and valued, because an ill-bred woman, your inferior, presumes to annoy you; you are too wise, too high for that."

"I am neither wise nor high," said I sadly. "Mrs. Harcourt has recalled me to a sense of the unseemliness of mixing too much in society, the terrible sin of forgetfulness of which I have been guilty; henceforward I shall seek safety in retirement; I have enough in my memory to people a solitude." I stopped abruptly lest the unshed tears with which my heart was heavy, should gush from my eyes; I was in truth unspeakably wretched; my strength had for some time been sorely tried; it was death to me to turn from the tender consideration, the gentleness, the ready kindness I had ever met with in Reginald Leigh; but to know that this would probably soon be

bestowed on another, vowed to another, was too bitter for endurance at that moment of weakness.

Eleanor now entered with Mr. Longmore and Captain Fielden; I found it impossible to speak to them, and as we proceeded to the carriage I determined to finish the painful task I had begun.

“If then I am less sociable with you, than your friendship with my friend seems to warrant, forgive me, and accept the terms I offer of distant acquaintanceship.”

“I will not,” whispered Colonel Leigh, in low firm accents. I threw myself into the farthest corner of the carriage, and closed my eyes—Mrs. Harcourt and her insinuations—the report of Reginald’s engagement, all was forgotten in the intense wish to spare him any portion of what I myself suffered.

Eleanor was in high spirits, gay, talkative, so dear Madame Duchênois did not notice my deep depression.

But through the most stirring events, the strongest emotions, the deepest passion, runs the same everlasting flow of common place, and like the wave-worn stones that puzzle the ignorant

when found remote from sea or river, this current rounds and smooths the most angular granite of powerful emotion.

So in the routine of our quiet lives I grew calmer; I was glad, yet disappointed that two days passed over without any sign of Colonel Leigh. The third day Mrs. Longmore called, and after a few remarks, Madame asked, "what has become of my Colonel?"

"Oh! did you not hear! General Harcourt was ordered off suddenly to Detroit, and Colonel Leigh was sent with him; Richard met them going off the day after our party."

"That was very sudden," said Madame; "I hope that Colonel Leigh is not to remain there!"

"Oh! no. But I fancy the General will."

"Is it true that Colonel Leigh is to be married to Miss Harcourt!" asked Eleanor innocently.

"I do not know, but it seems natural enough," replied Mrs. Longmore.

"No, my love, it is not natural," said Madame. "Because he is well born, distinguished, and well off, and she is well born, wealthy and a relative, that is no reason why they might not do

each other irreparable injury as man and wife. I have seen enough of Emmeline Harcourt to know what she is; if she was proud yet tender, rich in love, faith, and womanly strength, firm, yet gentle, then such a match would be natural. Or if Reginald was quiet, torpid, satisfied with material ease, and contented with an indiscriminate worship. But as they are, she would harden him, and he would petrify her. Ah! my dear loves, when will the world acknowledge that in marriage the first consideration is not wealth, or position, or material suitability, but the interests of the eternal soul! *Ma bonne* Catherine, I did not expect such a remark from you."

"You make me feel quite ashamed of myself," said Mrs. Longmore laughing; "I really think Miss Harcourt a nice amiable girl."

"She is," returned Madame Duchênois. "Yet amiability is but a negative virtue."

"At all events the Harcourts would like the match," resumed Mrs. Longmore. "Are we to see you, Agnes, at Lady L.'s house warming to-morrow."

I shook my head.

“Why?”

“I do not intend going out this winter. Madame has Eleanor to accompany her, and I am happier at home.”

“You ungracious creature! But at least you do not intend to cut me?”

“Dear Catherine: you, who first trusted me, are far too precious a friend to be slighted. I shall always go to you—when you are alone!”

“What whim is this, Madame,” asked Catherine.

“I cannot tell.”

“Better not notice it,” said I, smiling. “Opposition strengthens all things; perhaps if you say nothing I shall be entreating for a card of invitation to the next great ball.”

It was the evening after this conversation that the Abbé Leclerc, an old friend of Madame’s, and one or two French acquaintances, had been spending it with us. We had been discussing various topics very agreeably, and enjoyed a round game of cards, whereat Captain Fielden, who had resumed his visits, had won, and been consequently in uproarious spirits.



I noticed that the old Abbé was silent and less gay than usual. I often caught his eye fixed on me, and I felt peculiarly restless, as I so often felt at this period; he was among the first to leave, but had scarce been gone five minutes when Susette entered, and quietly whispered me that "Mons. L'Abbé was waiting below to speak one word with me."

What could Mons. L'Abbé have to say! I was much surprised. Susette retired, and as soon as I could do so unperceived, I slipped from the room.

The Abbé was a small, spare, olive-colored old man, with thin grey hair, and deep-set eyes, like wells of ink, reflecting a spark of fire. He was punctiliously polite, and had an air of astuteness that always partially awed me.

He was standing by the stove in the hall as I descended, and commenced a string of elegantly turned apologies for asking me to come to him.

After due assurances on my part that the trouble was a pleasure, he began, cautiously—

"Madame has Irish acquaintances in Quebec?"

"No, Monsieur—unless Lady L. is Irish."

"No other Irish acquaintance. Ah!"

A portentous pause. "I may speak confidentially to Madame?"

"Certainly, Monsieur."

"There has been within the last few days, a misguided youth under my care, whose life I with some difficulty saved. He is in great distress, and frequently names you as the only person who can help him out of it."

"You astonish me, Monsieur L'Abbé. What is his name?"

"He is called Smith at his lodgings."

I shook my head. "That is a new name to me."

"But," resumed the Abbé, "I imagine he has another name, Dawson."

"Ah! Frank Dawson; poor fellow; how could he have got into such state, Monsieur. I would do much to serve that young man. Direct me."

"Madame would not object to visit him with me."

"I shall be very glad. When shall I go?"

"Could you venture to-morrow after night fall? it is not in a pleasant part of the lower town; but the poor young man is in despair."

"I shall be quite ready. Will you call here for me."

"No. The affair is a secret; pray do not mention it to Madame." I bowed assent.

"To-morrow evening, then, about dusk, leave the Château, and walk towards the lower town. I will meet you as if by accident, and your own wit will invent some excuse for Madame's curiosity."

A sound of persons leaving the salon now induced him to beat a hasty retreat, and I vanished into one of the long passages branching from the hall in the old mansion.

This episode created a vivid curiosity and a species of fear in my mind.

Not that I shrunk from visiting poor Frank, I was only impatient to serve him at any risk; but I had a vague presentiment that I should get into trouble. Nevertheless, I was no coward.

Yes, I might serve Frank Dawson, though it had been forbidden me to close my poor brother's eyes.

And at the memory of all I had endured, of hopeless loathing, and silent helpless agony, my

conscience rebuked me for my present despondency.

At least I was free, and if the unspeakable happiness of being the chosen of my heart's choice was denied me, there were yet objects in life to which I might devote myself; to cheer the mourner and heal the wounded spirit; and pay back some tittle of the love I received.

Yet was it with unutterable weariness and fainting, my spirit replied to reason's efforts at strength and firmness.

I could not invent any excuse for going out at so unusual an hour the next evening, and contented myself with simply telling Madame and Eleanor that it was on a charitable errand, and that I would be obliged to them not to question me.

It was quite enough; they bade me God speed; and wrapping myself in a cloak and thick veil, I proceeded in the direction agreed upon, to meet the Abbé.

I soon perceived him on the side of the street shaded from the rising moon, which glimmered coldly bright and pure on the white world which lay beneath her beams.

"This is an act of true charity, Madame."

"I take a deep interest in the young man," I replied, for I am about to tell you a secret, Monsieur L'Abbé; he once unconsciously, served one very dear to me."

"Ah!"—long drawn out.

I was so far confidential with the Abbé: for Frank Dawson was young and handsome; and I could not expect everyone to be conscious of the peculiar difference between us, which made me feel as though I could lend aid and protection to the strong man, rather than look for it from him.

"He has but partially confided in me," resumed the Abbé. "He is not in the Catholic church, tho' an Irishman. It is now four days ago since a poor emigrant *protégé* of mine, who settled here as a carpenter, called me in to see a young man whom he had found grievously wounded and groaning in the street. It seems that Jacques Culleen (so he pronounced it) had resided somewhere in Ireland where this young man's father had been the seigneur; and he is undoubtedly devoted to him."

"But his wound," I exclaimed, in no small horror; "how could he have received it?"

The Abbé shook his head. "We have collected a little from his ravings: there is some gambling at the bottom of it."

"It must be a bad affair."

"No doubt the poor young man will confide in you."

Little more passed between us, as we now approached a portion of the lower town, totally unknown to me. It was unclean in every sense, crowded, dark, drunken. I clung to the Abbé's arm not a little frightened; every moment, some half-tipsy man would address my companion—sometimes jeeringly, but oftener some compatriot of poor Frank Dawson's would bid "God speed his riverence," in kindly tones.

At length, after various windings and turning, Monsieur L'Abbé stopped at a partially glazed door, through which as well as the shutterless window, the light of a blazing fire streamed and flickered; after knocking twice, the door was opened by a rough-looking man, with a perfect bush of red hair standing out wildly over his face.

"Is it yer riverence?" said he, peering cautiously forth.

"Yes, yes, let us in."

"Then you be brought the lady; the Lord be praised!" he exclaimed, opening the door wide and ushering us into an apartment half kitchen, half workshop, where pieces of wood and shavings were scattered about in alarming proximity to the fire.

"Faith, he's roarin' mad betimes to-day, but it's not out of his sinses he is—begorra, mee ould woman hid the poker an' tongs afeard he'd commitshuicide. There's somethin' terrible an his heart. The wound is better."

"Can I see him now?" asked I eagerly and throwing back my veil, which I instantly regretted, as the man fixed his eyes on me with an intentness, evidently bent on learning my face off by heart.

"If he's not bether afther a sight iv ye, mee Lady, it's all over with him," exclaimed our host, with a sort of respectful admiration that astonished me.

"Has Mr. Dawson had a doctor?" I asked.

"No," replied the Abbé. "His wish for secrecy was so great that the idea of medical aid nearly set him wild; fortunately his wound was a simple one, and he is only weak from loss of blood."

Here a comely woman with a baby in her arms came out of what seemed a cupboard door, and said "Masther Frank was ready to see us." She proceeded to light a candle, and then reopened the door, which displayed a winding narrow stair.

"You had better go alone," said Mons. Leclerc. "I will join you when you call."

I therefore followed the woman up the stairs, at the top of which she ushered me into a tolerably comfortable room, where on a low bed lay Frank Dawson, pale, ghastly, desperate looking, with a beard of a week's growth. His arms were stretched out, the hands clasped together, and his eyes closed.

The moment my conductress had seen me across the threshold she retired, and I stood for a moment irresolute and most uncomfortable.

A light was burning in a deep jar to shade it



from the invalid, and not knowing how to wake him—if he did sleep—I walked softly to where the jar stood, raised the candle, and snuffed it.

The light roused him. “Kitty!” he exclaimed in weak, querulous tones. “Leave me in peace; I tell you I have neither the strength nor the spirit left to dash my brains out.”

I turned slowly to him, holding the candle so as to throw the light on my face.

He started, colored, and then feebly covering his eyes with his hands exclaimed, “I dare not look at you; you do not know what a miserable wretch you have come to see. It is too good of you.”

“I am told you asked for me, and I am here to serve you if I can,” said I, feeling the poor young man was in some terrible strait, and drawing a chair to his bedside. “If it is not too much for you to speak, confide in me, and together we may discover some escape from whatever difficulty you are in.”

“You are an angel of goodness to me, at all events,” groaned poor Frank. “But I am afraid

I'm past all help; there's nothing before me but ruin—ruin of character, life, everything—but mind me, Mrs. Malcolm, I'll have the heart's blood of them that brought me to it, tho' I've no one to blame but myself!"

This incoherent speech left me as much in the dark as ever. "But Frank," I exclaimed, addressing him with unconscious familiarity, "it is better to try and mend your own position; I came expressly to hear what has happened to distress you; do not hesitate to trust me; you do not know how glad I should be to help you in any way, and if there is a secret in the matter, I'll keep it."

Frank again groaned, and begged I would leave him, that it was all a mistake of the Abbé's, to trouble me. But I was determined not to leave him in so miserable a state of mind, and after immense trouble, he at length unburdened his heart. Once the ice was broken, he was eloquent and fluent enough.

It appeared that from his own negligence, affairs at Liberty Hall had got into sad disorder, and that to right them he had borrowed a hundred

and fifty pounds from Mr. Earle, who had lent the money, Frank said, "without the scratch of a pen."

Intent on general reformation, Frank started for Quebec, and put up at an hotel near the Citadel.

The evening he arrived he made acquaintance with an officer, and this officer told him of some wonderful billiard-player, who might be seen at a public room. Frank, in his idleness, consented to go to see him, was bitten with a desire to try his luck, and lost some trifle. The officer then proposed a game of cards, and then commenced the fascination of varying chances, to which poor Frank completely yielded.

It seems that the play in these rooms was under some check, and the officer proposed their meeting at some gambling house in the lower town, kept, I believe, by the celebrated billiard player. Here Frank lost a large sum to the officer, and then the entire hundred and fifty to the billiard player, an American. It took several nights to accomplish this, and at last, goaded to madness by his losses, for he had played away

Liberty Hall, everthing he was worth, and the money so generously lent him, he saw, or imagined he saw, symptoms of foul play; sprang on his adversary, a scuffle ensued, the American drew his bowie knife, and Frank only remembers staggering and falling from loss of blood in the street.

His first thought on coming to himself in the room where we now were was for concealment. If he was to die, let him do so without encountering those whose highly valued esteem he had forfeited; if he was to recover let him hide from them somewhere far away. The only friends he had in Canada were the Earles, and after them, his thoughts were turned to me, as the only person he dared confide in. But my name had escaped him half unconsciously. "You see," he concluded, "what a hopeless concern you have troubled yourself to look after. Now leave me to the ruin I have so richly deserved."

"I will not, and it shall not be ruin yet," said I firmly. Poor Frank raised himself on his elbow, and gazed at me his fiery black eyes suffused with tears.

“And how will a creature that has beauty instead of strength, and grace instead of courage, prevent it?” he asked, sinking back with a pale desponding smile.

“Frank my friend, I may not have muscular strength, but I have the sinews of war nevertheless; you say this officer made you mortgage Liberty Hall, to pay him and continue your play before you touched Mr. Earle’s money; you must make it appear that you have already sold it, and let the man who lent you the money take the property, you’ll do better yet. The hundred and fifty you owe Mr. Earle you shall have by this time to-morrow evening. I can get it for you, and—”

“What rob you!” cried Frank. “No! by all the saints in the calendar; my character, my future is not worth that.”

“Yes it is,” I returned, “and the friend who will accommodate you need not be robbed, you’ll pay the money yet. Then no one need be the wiser of this unfortunate affair, but first you must swear to me never again to play for money.”

It was a long time before Frank would consent,

though I could read in his eyes how he longed to grasp the welcome relief. And anxious to screen him, as though he had been my brother, I was no less eager he should accept my offered assistance. I did not then tell him that I had strong hopes of persuading Mr Longmore to interest himself in procuring a government appointment for this repentant prodigal, where I fancied he would be safer than managing a property, for which employment he had not sufficient steadiness.

After much persuasion he at last consented, turning his face to the wall to hide his deep emotion. "The sooner you are removed from this the better," said I, returning to my place beside him, after snuffing the candle. "Return to your first hotel, they will wonder at your absence."

"I left it after a week," he replied, in a low tone, "to put up at the American's; but I must get my things from him."

"Do not get into another fight," said I, warningly, "and keep up your courage; I shall be proud of you yet; your secret is safe with me."

"You are an angel, and that William Alexander will not peach; for it's as much as his commission is worth to have the affair known."

I started, but made no observation, as I saw the name had slipped his tongue inadvertently.

"Let us call up the Abbé and consult him," said I, "about your removal."

Frank nodded his head, and M. Leclerc immediately responded to my summons.

"I see," said he, scrutinising his patient, "that you are the best doctor, Madame."

"Frank," said I, "we must take Monsieur into our confidence. It would have saved you a good deal if you had done so before. He is perfectly safe."

"As you will; I have every confidence in the Abbé," replied Frank feebly. He was much exhausted.

"One word before we say good-bye," I exclaimed: "let Mons. L'Abbé get your things from that American. Did you not pass under another name there?"

"Yes—Smith; you will do whatever you think best."

"To-morrow, then, I will see you."

"Let us leave him," said the Abbé, feeling his pulse.

As I turned to go the poor fellow caught my hand and kissed it with such an expression of relief, that my eyes filled with tears at the idea of having been able to afford it to him.

Murmuring "God bless you," I left the room.

I hastily gave M. Leclerc an outline of Frank's story, as we returned home, to which he listened with great interest.

"Ah!" said he, "I think I could name this officer who figures so conspicuously, a *vaut rien*, but a deep one. His is the ignoble thirst for gold, which yet seldom betrays him into any really fatal mischief. It is better to leave him alone, he is a venomous serpent."

When we reached the Château Granville I begged the good priest not to wait till the gate was opened, as the night was so piercingly cold.

"No, no!" he replied; "I will see you safe in, for there is a man hanging about whom I have watched dogging us some time, at least, I fancied so."



I looked round, but nothing met my eye save the clear sky and dazzling snow in the open space before the château. The next moment I was within the gate; another, and dear Eleanor's arms were round me.

"We have been so frightened about you; what kept you so long, *chérie?*" she asked.

"Oh, hearing a confession," said I, as I ran up stairs to Madame.

How bright and comfortable everything looked—the brilliant lamp, the open piano, the work, and books. I felt light-hearted and happier than I had been since I had left Oakdale.

"I should have mentioned that I had the good Abbé's escort," said I in reply to Madame's fears, for I did not see why his part in the expedition need be concealed; probably he imagined the affair infinitely worse than it was.

No one had visited Madame that evening luckily, and the next she was going with Eleanor to a *soirée* at the house of Henri de Lille's aunt, where Henriette and Delphine resided. I had intended accompanying them, but I now pleaded my engagement with the Abbé.

“You shall go on a charitable errand every evening, *mon amie*,” said Madame, as we were retiring for the night: “you are gayer, brighter, more like yourself than you have been for a long time. My child, because your old friend has been silent, do not think she has been unobservant; I have been deeply pained by your depression, and the sort of struggle that seems to have been disturbing you. My love, I do not ask your confidence, but remember I know every change of your voice, and as a mother I rejoice in your happiness, and grieve at your grief; you at least have sympathy.”

I thanked and embraced her.

Yes! I was strong and of a good courage that night. What! though one path to happiness was barred, was I therefore to shut my heart in darkness, and say “the days are evil.” No! let me rather spread wide its portals to human sympathies and kindly compassion, and thus trading with my Lord’s money, increase my existence an hundred fold.

I slept well and awoke to think clearly and deeply on the work that lay before me.

Though I had not added much to my store since I came to Canada—at least, I had not diminished it; and my first act that morning should be to draw a hundred and fifty pounds from the bank where, at Major Grahame's advice, I had invested it—nay, I would make it a larger sum, for poor Frank probably had not a sous, and then for Mr. Longmore's. Yes, I would go to Mr. Longmore first; I thought over my engagements for the day—a singing lesson for Miss Harcourt was among them, for I continued to be her instructress, and received much more courtesy from Madame *mère* since I had met her insolence with spirit, for the old rhyme will ever be true—

“Tender hearted stroke the nettle,  
And it stings you for your pains;  
Grasp it like a man of mettle,  
And it soft as silk remains.”

Mr. Longmore was just rising from breakfast when I entered their dining room, and was as ever cordially welcomed. With some embarrassment I told my errand.

“So you want a government clerkship for your

*protégé*. I remember this Dawson, a likely likeable young fellow. Pray have you any personal interest in his success, Mrs. Malcolm?"

"Come, I am in earnest, no jesting if you please, do you think you can serve him?"

"Seriously I'll try; there are some small appointments up the country, further west; would he mind that?"

"Oh no! the wilder the country the better for him."

"By George," exclaimed Mr. Longmore with a sudden spasm of memory, "they tell me Hobbs, one of my own subs is going to resign, he is up at Montreal, if so I'll nominate your friend."

"Oh thank you, dear Mr. Longmore," I exclaimed seizing his hand.

"Come, come," said Catherine, "I'll not permit you to embrace my husband, unless you promise to spend the day with me; I have letters and books, and dresses, and varieties from England, do stay?"

But I was obliged to refuse; I got leave to mention this hope to Frank Dawson, and in turn said I thought he would be in town the next day.

As I was at the bank early, I considered myself safe from observation, nevertheless, I was not the only visitor to the establishment, for at my elbow as the clerk was calling over the notes he gave me, I found Captain Alexander.

He addressed me politely in an unembarrassed manner, spoke of the weather, and begged to accompany me if I had any further to go.

I was determined not to show him any coolness, so assented, and he walked with me to General Harcourt's, talking on common-place subjects, while each was conjecturing how far he or she was in the other's power.

Miss Harcourt was more languid than usual, sighed frequently and audibly, and before I left, revealed the cause of her depression. "Papa was to have the command at Detroit and the surrounding district; and is it not strange, Mrs. Malcolm, Colonel Leigh prefers remaining here, and has declined a staff appointment."

"Quebec is a gayer place, you know," said I.

"Yes; but I did not think he cared for that."

I offered no further conjecture, and Mrs. Harcourt entering at that moment, informed me

coldly enough that Miss Harcourt could only have the benefit of one more lesson. I was secretly rejoiced to hear it, and received Mademoiselle's regrets and kindly expressed good wishes with much complaisance.

It was a long day to me though a busy one; but at last the evening closed in, and the hour approached at which the Abbé was to meet me. I longed to set poor Frank's heart at rest.

As usual, the same route appeared much shorter to me the second time I traversed it. The door was as cautiously opened as before, and Jim Cullen ejaculated an emphatic "Glory be to God," when I entered.

"Faith, an sure its yer ladyship that's rus him from death itself! Begorra! the heart jumped inside iv me on I hearin' him whistle 'Husht the cat' this morning. But, faith, there was a mighty commandin' sort of a gentleman come see him an hour ago."

"Is he gone," I asked anxiously.

"To be sure he is—d'ye think I let him stop, and yer ladyship, let alone his riverence, expected."

"Monsieur Dawson will tell us all," said the Abbé.

Frank was seated in an uneasy chair by the fire: he looked anxious, but much better—marvellously improved. The Abbé, at my request, assisted at our conference.

I shall never forget poor Frank's look of rapture as I placed the money in his hand.

"I must take it," he murmured, "yet how I shall ever repay it, God knows."

"You may hope to do so," said I, and then proceeded to tell him my efforts to interest Mr. Longmore in his behalf.

Frank was now elevated beyond all rational bounds, was already in possession of a magnificent income, on which, nevertheless, he would pinch himself until out of debt. "But," he exclaimed, after running on in rapturous thanks and glowing anticipations, "bad luck to the news I have got for you; after your saving me body and soul, who do you think has found me out? Alexander! the Devil go with him!"

"How?" asked the Abbé and I in one breath.

"God knows. But I fancy he was afraid

they'd murdered me, and that if my body was found and an inquest held, ugly facts might come out, so he has been prowling about looking for me, and he says he heard some one name me at this door; at all events, he made his way in about dusk this evening, and was mighty civil, but his errand soon came out, for I could not help telling him he had better look sharp, for I was as good a man as ever, and would be back in the world before a week was over. He turned pale, and then says he, 'I wonder by what means you managed to interest Mrs. Malcolm so much as to induce her to visit you after nightfall,' adding a lot of stupid rubbish."

"And what did you say," I asked hurriedly.

"I swore by every saint in the calendar you had never come near me. Then the traitor let out that he had watched you out of the place up to the Château Granville, so I swore that it was a servant Madame Duchênôis sent to enquire after me, and that if he did not believe me, as soon as I was well I'd send a bullet through his head just to enlighten him."

Good Heavens! how unfortunate. "Frank,"



said I, "why did you not tell the truth; I am not ashamed of having come to see you. The only way to meet these slanders—for slanders will spring from Captain Alexander's version of the story—is to be candid. Let me tell Madame part of your story—I mean that you met with an accident and were obliged to stay at the house of a former tenant; that Mons. Leclerc found you: let it appear that I visited you at her desire; my having come with the Abbé is enough; and to-morrow remove to the —— Hotel. You will find there a trifle over the £150 for present necessities, and hold yourself in readiness for a visit from Mr. Longmore."

Poor Frank, now quite aware of the terrible mistake he had made in telling such transparent falsehoods, hung his head in deep penitence, and the Abbé told us he had visited the scene of Frank's fatal gambling. It looked like a mere eating house; but the inhabitants were very reluctant to resign any of their victim's effects until a significant hint at police interference quickened their sense of *meum* and *teum*.

After discussing a few more details, we took

our leave of poor Frank, who looked terribly crest fallen.

Madame Duchênois and Eleanor had not yet returned when I reached home; and I seated myself at the piano to try the effect of the concord of sweet sounds in soothing my somewhat disturbed spirits; mechanically my fingers sought the chords of the hymns to which I had been accustomed in Mr. Herbert's church. They recalled those passed away, most vividly, and I was surprised to find how much I had ceased to think of the past. Yes, the present engrossed me. It seemed as if a new growth of mind had sprung up during these tranquil years—calmer, clearer views—a truer appreciation of life and love, that is religion. I was sad, but not bitterly sad.

I had been so wonderfully guided and guarded that I could not fear for the future; while the thousand tokens of Almighty love constrained me to take up the present cross cheerfully and without shrinking.

Madame and Eleanor were very tired; they said they had had a very dull evening, and tho' I thought it highly improbable he would be there,

I yet listened with some anxiety to their reply when I asked, "Did you meet Captain Alexander?"

"No, no!" returned Madame; "*La bonne tante* does not encourage red coats."

I attended Madame to her room, and once there, confided a good deal of Frank's story to her.

She was much concerned on my account; "we must be as candid as possible, *ma belle*," she exclaimed. "How fortunate that you were accompanied by the Abbé; this Alexander is no friend of yours. There is something venomous in his voice when he addresses you. How is this?"

"I am sure, dear Madame, I do not know; on our voyage out he rather excited my contempt by teasing me with audaciously expressed admiration when I was alone, and treating me *de haut en bas* before Major and Mrs. Grahame. I showed my disdain; he cowered before it; *voilà tout*."

"And enough," she replied: "do you not know that such animals despise women, and when they find one high enough, and strong enough to subdue them they hate her in proportion as they

are compelled to respect. Nevertheless, do not exasperate him; a male friend can seldom do much good, but a male enemy is a deadly antagonist for a woman; a look, a smile, may do irreparable mischief, where a woman's spoken slander will be disbelieved as envious; a mean man, that can hate woman, is a poisonous reptile!"

"You are a very oracle to night, dear friend," said I, kissing her. "So we must meet exaggeration with truth."

"When shall we see poor Frank Dawson," she asked, "I am so grieved for him?"

"Oh! I daresay, to-morrow;" and I then proceeded to inform her of my application to Mrs. Longmore.

"And does my Agnes ever remember how unfitted she is by age, to become the mentor and protectress of a wild handsome young man?"

"*Chère dame*, I feel as if he were my grandson; and judging from appearances, I should say he reciprocates the feeling: surely you, too, must feel this—you do not for a moment imagine I could care for such a good-natured scapegrace as Frank?"

“Not for a moment,” replied Madame; “yet, my dear love, guard your heart; remember some are strong and wild, and like Noah’s raven, finding no resting place, wander ever to-and-fro, but seldom return like the dove to the ark, from whence she was sent forth over the waters of life.”

Again, hastily kissing my venerated friend, I bid her good night, and retired to ponder over her words.

Several days past over, and nothing was heard of Captain Alexander. Frank had moved to the hotel; and paid us a visit the first day he ventured to walk. He was in high spirits; he had seen Mr. Longmore, who had taken him *pro tem.* into his special office, to see what he could do. He had of course, been thoroughly cheated as regarded the mortgage; but he was a free man: and had he been heir to a dukedom and a hundred-thousand a year, he could not have enjoyed gayer and more infectious good spirits.

The Château Granville was now no longer the quiet tranquil place, in which I had first taken up my abode. Eleanor’s sweet young

voice was carolling from morning till night; and the day Frank Dawson called on us, we were charmed with a visit from Mr. Earle and Victor. What hearty greetings, and voluminous inquiries were exchanged. The good "master," as Mr. Earle was termed in his own household, was looking more like the impersonation of health and strength, moral and physical. It was delightful to see him seated by Madame, in the evening; his daughter's little white hand, quite covered up and hid in his huge brown one; his mild, grave, blue eyes beaming benevolently on us, as he described with much delight and great minuteness, the various beauties and conveniences of his married daughter's new home.

With some difficulty we persuaded him to leave Victor with us, much to that young gentleman's joy; and from that moment tranquillity was at an end in the Château Granville.

Susette became his slave from the first day of his sojourn. François' other duties seemed all to have merged in perpetual cleaning and preparing skates and snow shoes for Monsieur Victor.

He speedily struck up a friendship with

Captain Fielden, who remarked his strong likeness to Eleanor; and they were constantly together.

"Oh! Mrs. Malcolm, dear Mrs. Malcolm," exclaimed Victor, rushing into the drawing-room the first day he was going out with Captain Fielden. "Will you mend my glove, for I am going with the Captain to see the sleigh club driving, and Captain Fielden's is the gayest of them all."

"Who told you so, Victor," asked the Captain.

"Oh! François—every one. But where is that grave Colonel Leigh, he asked me to go see him; will he be out to day; for I should like to see him."

"He is not in town," said Madame.

"Yes, he returned two days ago," replied Captain Fielden.

"Indeed!" said Eleanor, "I wonder he has not been here."

"I will tell him how much he is missed," re-turned Captain Feilden; "I assure you, you were the first person he enquired for on meeting me the day he arrived—both Alexander and

myself dined with the Rifles; and I remember he and the Colonel went off to smoke or drink coffee."

"I do not like Captain Alexander," said Eleanor.

"Unfortunate man—really Colonel Leigh cuts us all out. Ready? Victor. Come along then."

The information dropped by Captain Fielden afforded me ample food for thought.

Colonel Leigh's last words to me were a positive refusal to be content with mere common acquaintanceship; he is then absent for ten days, spends the first evening of his return with Captain Alexander, three days elapse and still he does not appear. There was but one solution to the riddle—my visit to Frank had been misrepresented, and he at least believed that the interest I took in him was personal.

To destroy this impression was almost impossible, I could not myself approach the subject and most probably he would avoid it.

Frank had never been able to speak a word with Captain Alexander without witnesses, as that gentleman avoided him; nor had I seen him since we had met at the bank.



I was quite helpless; yet how I burned to clear myself in Reginald's eyes. I could renounce his love, but not his esteem.

The evening after Victor's drive with Captain Fielden, we were engaged to a small impromptu party at Lady L.'s; I decided to go, as I was nervously anxious to meet Colonel Leigh.

I could not repress the tremor, the aching, gnawing pain that shook my frame. Is it possible that the opinion of another could thus move me, that robbed of it, not conscience itself sufficed for my peace. Yes! it was agony to think he should doubt me; he, round whom clung the one wild hope which dimly-formed my life's object; that I should yet tell him all, and see those grave calm eyes grow tender with sympathy, and hear that stern voice mellow into the rich tones, with which even now he sometimes addressed me.

Eleanor remarked I looked pale, and said it would do me good to go with them, so I dressed with a palpitating heart.

There were very few at Lady L.'s, sufficient to make up a few card tables, and leave enough of

people to crowd round the piano and books of prints.

Colonel Leigh was playing whist when we came in, he did not look up nor did I catch his eye for more than an hour after, for he moved from the card table to Miss Harcourt's side, where he stayed for a long time, listening rather than speaking it is true, and looking I thought care worn and pale.

After a while Captain Alexander joined them, and then they laughed a good deal, in the midst of this Colonel Leigh suddenly glanced towards us, and ashamed of seeming to watch him I felt the color rush to my brow.

A few minutes after he was speaking to Madame Duchênois, beside whom I had kept my place; he next noticed me by a profound bow.

"Why, where have you been Colonel?" said the cheerful old lady. "Are you going to let me wear the willow for your sake."

"My dear Madame, the service of my country compelled my reluctant absence."

"Pooh! *mon* Colonel, you are three days back from Detroit, and still the Château Granville has not seen you."

"It shall see me to-morrow, however," he returned, for I have a letter for you, from my sister; she has various pieces of intelligence to give you."

"Oh, indeed!" cried Madame, taken off her opening subject, "do not fail to come."

After a few more observations some other acquaintance claimed Madame's attention, and Reginald turned to converse with me. But though, perhaps, more fluent than usual, what a cruel change had taken place. No abrupt glimpses of his inner self, no half spoken, half looked sentences revealed feelings hidden from the world. No: with the polite urbanity of a man of the world, he remained beside me, talking on a thousand indifferent topics, well, composedly, intelligently—but oh! how clearly he showed me I was no longer in his estimation, something apart from the common world.

It was well I felt so deeply, for my pride rose up and bore me with a strong pinion over the trial. I answered him as calmly as he spoke; I met his eyes full and fearlessly, and before Madame was again free to give him her atten-

tion, I could perceive a gradual change in the expression of his countenance—the cold composure was giving way, the grave eyes were growing eager. I retired from the conversation as Madame joined in, and Colonel Leigh was just enquiring for Eleanor, when Captain Alexander strolled by.

“How do you do, Mrs. Malcolm? How d’ye do, Madame? No persuading you to take a hand at whist, Mrs. Malcolm; you are too young for that, eh!”

Madame replied for me.

“Pray,” was the next question, “what account have you of Dawson; I have not seen him for some time, but you are sure to know.”

“He is better,” said I quietly, “and was with us two days ago.”

“You remember Monsieur Dawson?” said Madame to Reginald; “he has been badly hurt somehow or other in the lower town, where Monsieur Leclerc discovered him, and I felt so anxious to ascertain his real state that I absolutely sent Agnes to see him under the good

Abbé's care, not being content with any other report."

"Indeed!" returned the Colonel, with a slight start, "he ought to be much indebted to both ladies."

"Yes, yes! Dawson is a lucky fellow," sneered Captain Alexander.

"I do not know how you make that out," returned Madame, briskly, "for I fancy he has been cheated at play lately, and his wound arises from some gambling-house affray, though, poor fellow, he is too much ashamed of it to speak out, and instead of having his enemies punished, is content to suffer in silence."

"That is all nonsense," said Colonel Leigh.

"So I think," added Captain Alexander, "but I see Sir Harry wants me at the whist table."

My heart throbbed high at the dexterous explanation which Madame had offered; but before I summoned courage to look at Colonel Leigh, Lady L. approached to carry me off to the piano. I would fain have refused, but dared not spare myself.

It was a desperate effort to sing. I do not know how I accomplished it. I remember there was a moment in one of my songs, a favourite one of Colonel Leigh's, when my voice trembled, and almost broke down. I made a desperate effort at self-command, and the next note came out full and clear. The words of the ballad asserted the faithfulness of one doubted, and almost unconsciously I threw my very soul into the music.

"I never heard you sing so well before, Mrs. Malcolm," cried Captain Fielden, who had been most perseveringly examining prints with Eleanor all the evening, "but at one time I was afraid you would have failed altogether."

I smiled and bowed, took Colonel Leigh's offered arm, and returned to Madame's sheltering side.

She spoke of leaving, but Lady L. begged her to wait for supper. Just before it was served, I saw Colonel Leigh, Major Urquart, and several other officers leave the room hastily.

Captain Fielden then came up. "There's a terrible fire in the Upper Town," said he; "they

are afraid the powder magazine will blow up, the military are all turned out, and I'm off to see what is going on, so good night."

These tidings cast a gloom over the supper party; gradually the gentlemen stole away, and Madame, Eleanor, and myself, prepared for our homeward walk, as we usually returned on foot from these early gatherings.

It was a fine but dark night, for there was no moon. The air was still, and the whole sky over the town and citadel was illuminated by a ruddy glow, while the indistinct rush and hum of a crowd fell upon the ear, though the streets we had to traverse were quite deserted.

"How constantly there are fires at Quebec," said Eleanor. "Have you ever seen one, Agnes?"

"Never; it must be a grand sight."

"I rather think this must be one of more than common magnitude, as in general a fire does not excite so much interest," remarked Madame.

When we reached home we found Victor at the gate in an agony of impatience to go to see the fire.

"Dearest Madame Duchénois, you will let me I know; Susette has been so terribly afraid, I would not go before you came back, but you will let me I know."

"Yes, you may go with François."

"Would you not like to see the fire?" said Eleanor to me.

I assented, and after adding a little more of fur and warm clothing to our already abundant supply, we started again for the upper town.

Insensibly we increased our speed as we approached the scene of devastation, and the roaring crackling sound of the fire reached our ears, and every now and then a loud sound of falling roofs or timbers diversified them.

At length we reached the spot; one side of a large oblong square was a bank of fire, the fierce forked flames streaming up to the solemn sky from the red mass beneath, and ranged at the opposite side was the closely packed crowd, while firemen, artillerymen, and soldiers plied the engines, which, as usual in such cases, were short of water.

The scene of excitement was tremendous, and



almost unconsciously I found myself in the thick of the crowd, and slightly elevated above it on a door step; the space which the heat of the fiery torrent kept clear between itself and the beholders was strewn with fragments of furniture, bundles of clothes, bedding, and every species of household goods, the wrecks of houses. I could perceive that the dark dress of the rifles was largely sprinkled among those engaged in the attempt to extinguish the flames, for every object between me and the fiery back ground was distinctly visible, in strong relief.

The mingled terror and thrilling fascination of the scene afforded my overwrought mind a strange sort of relief; I felt marvellously calm. The flames had now reached the far end of the square, and it was here that the corner of a powder magazine was considered in dangerous proximity. Various orders were now shouted even above the din and uproar, and I perceived the crowd round me crushing back to the lower end by which we had entered.

“What is the matter?” I asked a respectable looking workman who had just come up.

“They are going to pull down some of the houses at the corner, or to blow them up, for they can stop the flames no way!”

“Yes,” said François, who had darted forward to bring Victor back, “I see the artillerymen carrying down a barrel of powder covered with wet cloths.”

We also retired further off—every sense strained for the explosion. Again François ventured forward: “They have just laid the train,” he said, “we’ll have the explosion in a few minutes.”

He had scarcely spoken, when a shriek of agony rang above the other sounds of horror; and there was a pressure forward to hear the cause.

Almost immediately after, a dozen voices proclaimed that it was an unhappy mother, just removed from one of the houses, who had missed her youngest boy; and remembering she had seen him last in the house, from which she thought his father had taken him, endeavoured to rush back for him, but was forcibly held where she was, as the train had absolutely been fired, and in a few moments, the whole building would be destroyed.

I had scarce gathered the sense of the words,

they were not yet all spoken, when a little white object appeared at a front window, and at the same moment, a ladder was placed against the ledge—a murmuring ran through the crowd, and then all was profoundly still—a figure mounted rapidly to the window—a figure which even at the distance, I instantly recognized to be Reginald's. He snatched the child, and quickly disappeared; but it seemed to me and to many near me, that before he could have cleared the ladder, an awful crash rent the air—stone, wood, a confused shower of fragments were hurled into the air, and descended amid volumes of smoke and dust. Groans and sobs echoed about me. I fancied it impossible he could have escaped. For the moment, I was wild with an agony of grief. I rushed into the crowd towards the ruins like a madwoman, anxious only for certainty. Perhaps he still lived, though in a state of suffering, from which my care might partially relieve him—such were, I believe, my thoughts—if I thought. No! I obeyed a blind instinct of the heart, regardless of everything but the paroxysm of terror that impelled me.

The people made way for me compassionately, and I found myself within the scorching heat thrown out by the burning mass, when a hand on my arm arrested me, and a voice which at that moment was like heaven's own music to my ear, said, "Take care; pray go no further; what is the matter?" I turned and saw Reginald, blackened, and bleeding from a wound in the side of his head. "Oh, thank God! thank God! you are in life. Speak! Are you safe, unhurt from that fearful explosion? I thought you were gone. Excuse me, I am terrified; I do not know what I say;" and with the sense of his safety came a recollection of all I betrayed. But it was too late to struggle; I burst into a passionate flood of tears, the thick sobs shaking my frame; I could not suppress them; I drew my veil close over my face.

"I am quite safe," returned Colonel Leigh after a moment's pause, and in that tone of tenderness I had not heard for long. "But I am uneasy about you; let me see you out of this crowd." He turned, and drawing my arm through his, made his way towards the lower end

of the square, most considerately taking no notice of my emotion, though he held my arm closely, and guided my steps with the most attentive care.

But our progress was impeded; men and women crowded round my companion with blessings and praises; we could scarce get on. "You will be better when you are free from this pressure. Come, my lads! this lady has not recovered the fright yet, let us pass."

Just near the entrance of the square we met Eleanor, François, and Victor, looking about most anxiously for me.

"Dear Agnes, how did we lose you," cried the former.

"Mrs. Malcolm was so terrified at that poor child's danger, she ran forward for information; I was fortunate enough to meet her."

"And you, Colonel Leigh; I really thought you, too, were lost," cried Eleanor. "How did you escape?"

"I had a narrow escape;—just got far enough in time, and got off very well, though really I am not fit to appear before ladies. You had better

go home," he continued, bending down to speak to me; "you are over excited, and will require rest."

"You had better have your head bound up," said I, faintly, for I was thoroughly exhausted and subdued. "Pray come no further with us," and tried to withdraw my arm from his.

"I will go a short way," returned Colonel Leigh, "as my presence is necessary with the men; but I will see you clear of the crowd."

With some difficulty we persuaded Victor to leave the scene of action, as the fire had now received a check; he consented, and we moved off as fast as my trembling limbs would permit. I walked on in silence, Colonel Leigh and Eleanor supporting the conversation with great spirit. Never had I known Reginald so joyously animated. There had been no life lost, he said, and as to houses, a public subscription would reimburse the losers; for his own part he could not bring himself to regret the fire.

"I do not wonder at that Colonel Leigh; for you will be the hero, *par excellence*, of all Quebec for years to come."

“Pooh! I knew very well I had time enough to run up the ladder and down again before the train reached the powder; and knowing that of course the thing was simple.”

“But I must leave you,” he added, a few paces further on. “Here, Victor, give your arm to Mrs. Malcolm—take care of her—to-morrow I shall see you,” taking my hand in both of his. “To-morrow shall I not?”

I could only answer with a deep sigh; and after a few words with Eleanor he left us.

Before we reached the Château Granville, a shout, another, and another was borne to us on the still air. “Hark!” said Victor, pausing.

“It’s the crowd cheering Monsieur Le Colonel,” said old François; “he will have reached the square by this.”

“And so well they may cheer him; he is a splendid fellow. Vive Le Colonel!” shouted Victor. “Come, Madame, Eleanor—Vive Le Colonel!”

Madame Duchênois was waiting for us, and the instant we were in her presence, both Eleanor and her brother began a most confused though

glowing description of Colonel Leigh and the fire.

“Agnes, my love,” said Madame, “let me hear your version.”

“I can scarce describe anything clearly,” I replied. “The terrible scene, the mother’s agony, our friend’s danger, have quite upset me: to-morrow I shall be better able.”

“Yes, to-morrow,” said she, “your voice betokens total weakness; to bed, *bonne amie*, to bed.”

I was indeed thankful to be once more in the privacy of my chamber. I unfastened my shutters, and gazed out on the reflection of the fire reddening the heavens above, and glowing on the pure white of the world beneath.

That fire had betrayed me. I felt that Colonel Leigh had read my emotion aright; that it touched an answering chord in his heart at the moment, I could not doubt; and thus would the task before me be more difficult—more painful.

Yet I could not regret the scene which had just occurred. Oh! how my heart thrilled with rapturous pride in the man I loved; and the tears



on my cheek were dried by the glow of ecstasy as I felt he was not indifferent to me. Again—much as I dreaded hearing words of love, which I felt he would address to me—would not his silence, after such a display as mine, be worse; would it not be the most contemptuous slight. Alone with God and night I shrunk down crouching on the ground in shame, at the degradation of having betrayed my own feelings unsought. What would he think of me?

Yes! the woman who loves is a slave. She ceases to see, to hear, to judge for herself; and if possessed of intelligence and pride, the struggle between reason and the marvellous self-abnegation to him who has mastered her spirit, is painful, and never altogether without humiliation; yet I was peculiarly embarrassed.

That I should not love Reginald Leigh was impossible. But had I been surrounded by home influences, the fence of position, and the support of friends, I would not so readily have yielded my heart; I might then have waited the assurance of his affection before I unlocked the flood-gates of my own. As I had met him, cut

off as by death and resurrection, in a new world, from all I had ever been and known, perfectly a stranger, without one to share my secret, and separated as I imagined from every creature once familiar to me, when *he* came like a beam of the past's best brightness; inseparably associated with the happiest portion of my life, with those I most loved, with my own better self; the one link known to myself alone, that preserved me from utter insolation. My heart had sprung to him as to the nearest approach to home it had known for years.

And then his remembrance of myself. No! I should be more than mortal had I not loved him.

But if he knew my history, how would he esteem me. He respected me, dead; what would be his opinion of the coward who had fled from what she could not endure—from the husband she had vowed to cling to till death.

And then the solemn vows rose up before me: Oh, God! I was still a wife—and dared not, must not be another's.

After a night of weeping, I fell asleep towards

morning, and awoke with a racking head ache, and a strange sensation of numbness in my limbs. I feared I was going to have a fever.

My dear friends were as ever very kind. I felt humbly grateful to them, but only anxious to be left alone in darkness. Madame soon divined this, so I passed the day in a sort of torpor.

But I knew that both Madame and Eleanor were engaged to a dinner party at the Longmores, where there was to be dancing and music in the evening; and fearing my friends would disappoint both themselves and Catherine if I did not seem better, I exerted myself to rise and dress.

I resumed my place in the drawing-room the more fearlessly, for Colonel Leigh had called in the morning, and was much chagrined, Eleanor said, not to see me.

With some difficulty I persuaded them to leave me. Victor was also of the party, as there were to be charades and various juvenile entertainments in the evening.

After the house had subsided to a tranquillity most agreeable to my wearied nerves, and poor Susette had brought me a reviving cup of coffee,

I seated myself on the sofa opposite Madame's chair, and endeavoured to read.

When the mind is vexed, and the spirit low, it is impossible to attend to light works of fiction. The solemn interests, the startling contrasts which occupy the heart, cast into the shade, all that the mind of man can invent; at such a time some deep work touching the grand and universal laws to which all are subject, which regulate the material world, weaning the soul from the contemplation of its individual wrongs and sufferings, restore it to a community of feeling with the mighty Cosmos of spirits, in which lies its appointed place, can alone rivet the attention.

As languid and exhausted my mind wandered from the volume I held into the vague realms of aimless reverie, I took no note of time. A ring at the door bell roused my attention. I glanced at the time-piece on the chimney-piece—half-past eight. "They cannot surely have returned so early." I sunk back upon my cushions, but ere I had glanced again at the page before me, Susette opened the door softly, and asked, "Will Madame see Monsieur the Colonel."

I started up and hesitated; but he was close behind, and was holding my hand in his ere the half-formed sentence of refusal had escaped my lips.

"Do not exert yourself," he said, gently replacing me in my seat, he sat down beside me. "Believe me, I would not have forced my way to you so determinately were it not that too much depends on you to permit me any rest till I could hear your decision."

He paused, as if expecting some reply, but I was unable to speak. The trying moment had come—let us get over it as soon as possible.

"I have come," resumed Colonel Leigh, "to tell you, what you already know, that I love you—love you passionately! with the strangest feeling of old affection mingling with the newer, deeper feelings you have inspired. I have in vain struggled with this love. I have endeavoured to judge you, to unravel the mystery of your resemblance to her who is no more, of your evident understanding with young Dawson; but I give up all, everything! Though the whole world should testify against you, a glance from

your eyes would restore my faith. I leave it to you to confide in me or not, as you choose. All I ask, all I wish, is that you will be mine! Let us leave this vapid, heartless society," he continued rapidly, in spite of my effort to interrupt him, "and form a home for ourselves in some of the exquisite secluded spots we visited together while at Oakdale, where we can create a world of peace and truth after the roughness we have both experienced in life. Dearest beloved, let me guard you from grief or care, so far as one mortal may another."

Again he clasped my hand, but with the resolution of despair I drew it away. I strove to speak, the words would not come. At last I exclaimed—brokenly, gaspingly—"Colonel Leigh, I ought not to hear you, for I cannot be your wife—I *never* can be your wife. I will ever think of you with esteem, but—do not ask me to love you."

I covered my face in my hands, drawing long sobbing sighs, while my eyes were tearless. Colonel Leigh started from my side and stood before me.

“Agnes! What am I to understand? Last night the terror you showed on my account could not have been feigned. Then your reluctance to hear me now cannot be real. My own dear one, do not let some imaginary obstacle destroy my happiness. Confide in me—you can have nothing to conceal on your own account. For God sake, do not wreck the happiness of one so fondly attached to you, as I am, for any punctillio as regards another.”

I could scarce believe that this impassioned petition came from the lips of the cold proud Colonel Leigh. What agony I endured to see him suffer.

He had evidently felt certain from my emotion the night before that his feeling was reciprocated, and I must now persuade him to the contrary.

I slowly withdrew my trembling hands from my face, and not daring to look at him, I replied: “My joy at your safety last night was but natural; I have ever valued you as a friend, but hear me, Colonel Leigh; painful as it is to me to speak the words, I can never be your wife. Oh! never, never!—now leave me. Ah! yes, I

suffer deeply, and have suffered for many a long year, more than you can dream—therefore I can feel with and for you—therefore I am weak to endure; so leave me, I entreat you; not all you could say or urge could move me, I can *never* be your wife.”

“There is some accursed mystery at the bottom of this,” exclaimed Reginald sternly, “and I will fathom it. Why will you not be my wife? or have I deceived myself—you do not love me, Agnes;” and again he paused opposite me.

I felt the color recede from my cheek and the blood ebb from my heart as by a great effort I replied, “I have said I always esteemed you as a friend, Colonel Leigh.”

He turned from me and walked twice up and down the room. “Then I have to ask your pardon for intruding myself on you; you do not love me.” He was silent a moment, as if waiting a qualification or denial on my part. “Well,” he continued, “I will vex you no more; yet, Agnes, God formed us for each other, formed me for you rather than him whom you prefer.”

He turned to go, but I flew after him and



caught his arm: "Colonel Leigh, I swear before Heaven, if I cannot love you, at least I love no other. No—look in my eyes; see, there is truth there!"

"What am I to believe then?" he returned sternly. "These visits to Dawson when wounded; the strange understanding I perceived from the first between you. My unbounded confidence in you is a weakness, a folly I must endeavour to surmount. Yet," he continued, "if you do prefer him, I have no right to complain. May your decision tend to your happiness, and should you ever want a friend think of me in your hour of need as a brother."

"But I do not love him—ask Frank Dawson if I do—he will explain—I— Farewell, and may the good God guide, protect, and bless you."

He kissed my hand hurriedly and repeatedly, and then rushed from the room.

Over the weeks which immediately succeeded this interview, a dark pall of torpor, exhaustion, and dull despair, hangs like a cloud of oblivion. A low fever, a constant nervous dread, and then

the terrible repose when hope has withdrawn its delicious agitations prostrated me.

In vain conscience told my heart I had done well; as yet that still small voice was unheeded in the tumult of passion and grief.

All of sorrow I had hitherto known had an ingredient of bitterness, wrath, disdain; but here all was tenderness and unavailing regret; not one spring of indignation, not one mortifying circumstance to brace my spirit; only tears, and prayers, and hopeless submission.

*You* will not turn disdainfully from this candid record of disappointed affection, nor class it as utilitarians would, with the mawkish effusions, which school girls read in stealth.

No! it is an awful and a solemn grief when the heart, which nature and nature's God created to be perfect in love, and to reach its highest development through a mystic union with another, finds its other self; recognises its appointed partner, only to be separated, torn asunder, while the spirit-life ebbs away in the struggle. No wonder it has been the theme of poet and painter since the world had either.

Mine was no mere girl's fantasy, but woman's deepest, holiest, matured affection. The true marriage bond which makes man's superiority her highest pride; submission to the readily acknowledged master spirit, sweeter far than rule, and doubles her existence by merging it in another.

This, and this only, is the union which Christ ratifies with that solemn injunction, "What God has joined together, let not man put asunder."

But my tale has far outstretched the limits I had at first assigned it. Let me endeavour to condense what remains.

## CHAPTER III.

I think the first thing that roused me from my stupor, which continued to dull me even after I renewed my usual avocations, was the intelligence of Frank Dawson (who had been away for some time in Upper Canada, with Mrs. Longmore) having been appointed to some Government agency, to collect the tribute of the Indian tribes; or, I do not very well know what, a place of some emolument, and no small danger; but he seemed enchanted: and his letter contained an order for a hundred pounds; as Mr. Earle insisted on his retaining the loan and repaying it at his leisure.

The affectionate style of his letter, his tone of happiness, did me more good than anything else. Here, at least, was one saved from misery and ruin.

Gradually I was growing calmer; the calm of feeling a painful task accomplished—that there was no more to do or to hope.

Madame Duchênois, I felt, was quite aware of what had occurred, though she never broached the subject to me; she did not mention Colonel Leigh's unwonted absence, and scarce ever breathed his name; yet she was sad—a gloom hung over the house. Both Eleanor and her brother had gone back to Oakdale, where a merry Christmas party were to be assembled. We were importuned to join it, but in vain. The journey would have been too much for Madame; and neither of us were in the mood for mirth.

We were glad to be together; we could talk to each other of griefs and feelings, which each could understand without the other's explanation of the circumstances which called them forth.

I found consolation in faith and in resignation; though at times, anxious thrills of curiosity as to Reginald's proceedings, roused me to keener suffering.

He was still absent; having got leave of ab-

sence, and it was believed, was staying with the Harcourts, at Detroit. What more likely—that wearied and disappointed at my resolute rejection of him, he should turn to the gentle preference Emmeline always showed him, with a sense of repose and soothing.

How earnestly I prayed to God to guide him!

Madame was not well at this time; I had, therefore, an excellent excuse for avoiding society; yet my kind old friend, was eminently social in her tastes, and if secluded, loved to hear what was going on in the little world about us.

Dear Catherine Longmore knowing this, scarce ever failed in her daily visit, always bearing with her a little budget of gossip for Madame's benefit.

She frequently expressed her anxiety about my health, and put me to no small distress by the closeness of her friendly enquiries.

"Well, how are the invalids," said she, coming into the saloon a few days before Christmas; "well enough to dine with me on the Christmas day?"

I shook my head.

"Nonsense," she continued; "you shall have

beds if you are afraid of cold. But you know we have spent every Christmas together since we arrived in Canada."

"Oh, yes! Agnes," exclaimed Madame; "we must dine with our kind friend, we should be sad alone, and I always associate Christmas with our first meeting, *mon enfant*."

"Thank you, dear Madame Duchênois," said Catherine; "and I begin to fear this is the last Christmas we shall spend in Canada."

"How so," exclaimed Madame and myself.

"Mr. Longmore lost his eldest brother some months ago, you remember; and his father, a very old man, entreats us to return, that he may see us before he dies; I therefore fancy we shall start for England in the spring."

I could scarce restrain my tears at the idea of parting with this dear friend, to whose first trust in me I owed all of comfort and happiness I had since enjoyed.

"Spring is a good way off yet, however," said she, cheerfully. "And now for my principal piece of news. Captain Alexander started this morning *en route* for New York, having obtained

leave of absence to effect an exchange into some regiment in India—some people say because he was refused by Miss Harcourt—others that some ugly gambling transactions are on the point of discovery—and one curious report goes that Col. Leigh horse-whipped him at Detroit for presuming to propose an elopement to Miss Harcourt.”

“And what do you believe,” asked Madame.

“A little of all,” replied Catherine, “only I am glad he is gone on any account; he used to worry you, Agnes.”

“Not much; I ought not to have permitted him to do so at all.”

“Do you know,” said Catherine, rising to go, “we like your Mr. Dawson so much. Mr. Longmore says he is quite an acquisition; he is so cheerful, intelligent, and active.”

“He is much to be liked,” added Madame.

“Well, good bye; remember Christmas-day, six o'clock.”

The letter which Colonel Leigh had announced from his sister to Madame, and which I had forgotten among more exciting events, it now fell to my lot to answer. Madame, not feeling inclined



to dictate, merely told me the sum of what she wished to have said, and desired me to write in my own name for her.

This writing to Reginald's sister had a strange fascination for me. It was almost the only task that could interest me. I unfolded Mrs. Oldham's epistle, and perused it with care. I soon came to a passage that made my heart beat:—"Reginald's account of you, dear Madame, is delightful; and we rejoice that you possess so charming a companion as he describes Mrs. Malcolm to be; for it is no small matter to please my fastidious brother so completely as she has done; indeed, from the tone of his letter, I should say she has produced no common effect upon his heart or mind, I really do not know which."

A little further on occurred a name I had often longed to speak of, but feared to utter:—"You will see by the date of this that we have moved to Mr. Oldham's newly-purchased place. We are near neighbours to my father's old friend Lord Gresford; he married within the last three years a very delightful person, and we see a great deal of each other. You would be charmed with

Lady G. ; she is so fresh, so original, and thoroughly good; they have no family, but a little niece of Lady Gresford's lives with them—a poor deformed girl, but a sweet creature, and the happiest brightest being you can imagine. The whole family are universally beloved. Reginald is a great favorite of Lady G.'s; he knew some relative of hers who was killed in a dreadful way; but she, as well as yourself, deplores the want of an adequate object in his life."

It was long before I composed myself sufficiently to write. They were gentle tears I shed over this picture of my dear warm hearted Mrs. Falconer, and poor neglected Mary's happiness and prosperity; with the purest gratitude I thanked God for the tidings, and sat down to reply.

I wrote in a feigned hand, dreading lest by any accident my letter might meet Lady Gresford's eye, and how I yearned to say, "Tell your friend that Agnes lives, in tranquillity at least, if not in happiness, and prays for the welfare of her who was a friend in time of need."

Our Christmas day with the Longmore's was

gently happy ; I felt a strange shadow of coming events upon my heart, an echo, like the first breath of happiness on the chords of my spirit, yet I was uneasy.

On New Years' Day Mrs. Longmore called for Madame Duchênôis, and insisted on taking her on a round of visits in her sleigh.

I fancied there was something peculiarly urgent in Catherine's manner, she did not ask me to accompany them, but begged I would wait their return in the house ; they had scarce driven from the door when a rapid step on the stairs struck my ear, I was speechless with astonishment when Colonel Leigh stood before me.

Before I could utter a syllable he threw his arms round me exclaiming, "Agnes ? My Agnes ! I know all ! my doubts are at an end, my unconquerable conviction that you are the same I knew in England, is confirmed ; it is useless to deny it."

I hastily disengaged myself from him, terrified yet strangely relieved, "What ; what is this ?" I faltered, unable to contradict the perfect certainty that spoke in his looks and manners.

"I have discovered all, yet no living soul knows

you save myself," he returned more calmly. "My own dearest Agnes, what slow tortures you must have endured, what long agonies must have been inflicted on your helplessness before you could dare so bold an act!"

I turned from him, covering my face with my hands and yielding to the passion of tears, which his words called up.

Again he took my hand; "When I parted from you in bitter disappointment you told me I might question Frank Dawson; I lost no time, therefore, in starting for Detroit, where I had been informed he was staying with Longmore. But when I reached it he had left, for some barbarous locality in the interior. Here I again followed, and missed him; but a week after we met me at Detroit. I had, during my solitary journey, thought constantly over our interview—your solemn assurance that you did not love this Dawson—I could not doubt it. I then retraced our acquaintance, and two or three circumstances, which at the time of their occurrence, struck me, and were dismissed, returned with increasing force. The first day I beheld

you, in this very room, you called me Captain Leigh, the rank I held when we were acquainted in England. True Madame Duchênois, in speaking of me, might have mentioned it, and you might have become familiar with the word, but on discovering from your conversation that she had never named me, nay, that she had always mentioned my father by his original name of Harding, I felt strangely bewildered. Fielden's recollection of your peculiar nervousness and dread on the —th of June, again startled me, for I well remembered it was the anniversary of the seeming death of Agnes; and then when at last I found an opportunity of testing you, by recounting the story of our acquaintance, your marvellous self-command almost convinced me I was mistaken; one doubt, however, remained; you once supplied the word 'Ashbury,' as I paused for it in my narration. You explained this by assuring me that I had named it before, but I could not remember doing so, and the more I reflected, the more convinced I was I had not done so. Your subsequent coldness and avoidance of me, your preference for Frank Dawson, the mystery

that hung about you, and which I fancied Captain Alexander understood, conspired to set me mad—then your resolute refusal to be my wife! In this mood I met Frank. I had a delicate part to play, for, of course, he would resent any deliberate questioning. His own candour and warm friendship for you, however, soon broke down all reserve. I told him candidly how deeply my feelings were engaged, and then, as he cordially wished me success, he told me the whole history of your generous kindness, declaring that from the moment he told you of the little help he had been able to give the poor boy coming home from Australia, you had been like a sister to him. My natural question, ‘What do you allude to,’ drew forth all particulars, and the name of this youth whose end cost you such bitter grief was Arthur Waring. It is in vain to deny your identity now. Why—why did you not confide in me before?”

“Then if you know me, you at least can see extenuating circumstances in my conduct. Ah! none, but He who tries the heart, knows all the wretchedness, the hopeless, helpless abject misery

I had endured before I was wrought to commit so wild an act."

"I can imagine it," exclaimed Reginald, drawing closer to me: "I, who know the spring of your character, the reason of every tender light and shade that lends such exquisite variety to your countenance, the deep affection, the warmth, the purity of that lofty spirit, that true woman's heart; I can well understand the living death to which a union with such a base hound as your—no, I cannot speak the word—would to God I had crushed out his miserable life when I felt that unspeakable aversion at the first sight of him. Why, Agnes, why did you consent to such a marriage?"

"Do not despise me," I replied trembling. "It is hard to convey to you an idea of the helplessness of *poor* women; every one urged me; my mother would have been without a roof to shelter her had I not consented. I imagined Mr. Millar a kindly disposed man; I was free from attachment of any kind, and it was hard to refuse when self-sacrifice was demanded. Then I had no friend, nor any to help——"

I could not continue, and Reginald paced the room in silence. "You knew my home," I resumed, "you at least can compassionate and pardon me."

"Compassionate—pardon!" he exclaimed, "I can do more; there is not a pulse in my heart that does not throb for you, and pine to repay you for all you have suffered. May heaven forget me if I do not make you a home, as fair, as happy as peaceful as that you lost," and again he covered my hand with kisses.

"Reginald!" said I, alarmed, and extricating it from him: "You forget I am a wife."

"I deny it," he exclaimed, with much energy; "forced vows are never binding, and if they were your sufferings, your flight, your complete separation, have emancipated you from them. In God's sight, in mine, you are as free as air; do not let false prejudices dash the cup of happiness from your lips, and condemn me to utter wretchedness."

I was strangely moved, though horror-struck at his words. "How can you so deceive yourself?" I exclaimed; "and can you think because



I committed one error I could fall into one so much deeper; but you are excited, a moment's thought will show the madness of such an idea."

"I have thought of it ever since I spoke with Frank Dawson, and I am convinced you would be as certainly my wife after the ceremony of marriage, as your friend is Longmore's. And Agnes remember your secret—our secret—is known only to ourselves; what is it to others if your husband is satisfied."

I cannot write all the wild impassioned arguments with which he endeavoured to move me, and I dare not say I was immovable; more than once my resolution nearly failed me. Why should I contend against destiny? Why should I doubt the judgment of one, wiser and stronger far than myself? Had I not considered myself absolved from my vows at Chamouni; why then should they now stand between myself and happiness? But God lent me strength and a clear vision.

Reginald spoke of the effect my refusal would have on his life—"Aimless, hopeless, without a resting place for heart or spirit, I shall degene-

rate into a mere animal—or worse—into the coldness and hardness of sceptical despair. You cannot love me, Agnes, or you would not condemn me to such a fate, for an abstract idea of right. No! I have deceived myself; you cannot love me.” And he turned angrily away.

“I do love you, Reginald,” I cried, roused to the strong determination to end the trying scene. “I love you more than you can dream; the very light of heaven is dull compared with your smile, therefore, I will not condemn you to carry a secret which you dare not let the world know—as I have done. Nothing shall induce me to let you do that for which your conscience would condemn you. Oh, beloved! hear me, for I speak with the authority of experience; I have drunk the dregs of the cup of trembling, and wrung them out; evil cannot bring forth good, and there is a strength—a balm, in submission to God’s holy laws that will ever repay even the plucking out of the right eye—even such a severance as this. If I loved you less and self more, I might yield; but, Reginald, your future must never be clouded with

shame or concealment—and there is a glorious future before you, if you will let it be so. What! because the Evil One cannot give you what you desire, will you, therefore, resign allegiance to our Almighty Father, whose image in our hearts is our only title to freedom, nobility, and immortal life. I do not yet say happiness—man's soul was created for something higher still; but even in fulfilling our task, however painful, it will come to us—that God-like self-satisfying consciousness which makes us, like our great Prototype, sufficient to ourselves. Spare me, Reginald! Dearest Reginald, spare me! And go, leave our future to God.”

“I must obey! you are right. Though God knows the bitterness with which I allow it. Ours is a hard fate, Agnes! but,” throwing himself at my feet, “though I leave you, my heart is and will be ever full of you. There's not a tear you shed, a sigh you breathe, that in my desolate sorrow I do not respond to, though far away. I must not see you more, so farewell, my own best treasure! God guard you! farewell—farewell.”

Once more he clasped me to his heart, and then I was alone.

On reviewing the months, dreary and dark as they were, which succeeded this painful and exciting interview, I find they were less sad than many I had before spent.

In the first place I had done right. I had resisted a strong temptation. Then I had the delicious assurance of Reginald's deepest, warmest sympathy. The sense of loneliness was gone. I would at times have felt joy at this idea were it not for a continual anxiety on Reginald's account. I heard little, and saw nothing of him.

The provinces were again much disturbed, and the greater part of his regiment was stationed near the frontier: he was with it, endeavouring to check and punish the atrocities committed by the "sympathisers" and their allies. Besides this, I had, after some deliberation, determined to confide in Madame.

She was evidently aware of the fact that we had had some explanation, and as I had robbed her of society she so much enjoyed, I owed her a full confession. Besides, another admitted into

the secret, was a rampart erected between myself and Reginald, should he again renew the topic I hoped was ended between us.

This confidence was a source of great comfort to me. How warmly did my dear kind friend enter into my feelings how she wept over my griefs, and for Reginald, too, she mourned.

"It would have crowned my old age with joy," she said, "to have seen you united; I confess, I always looked to such an event as certain."

I endeavoured to absorb myself in duties and occupations, and I partly succeeded until roused by some of the rumours constantly flying about, touching Colonel Leigh's intended marriage with Miss Harcourt. 'Tis true I disbelieved them, but they suggested the idea of his marriage at some future day, the necessity of preparing my mind for it; I ought not even to regret such an event, for marriage alone, would restore him to peace and happiness, yet I could not contemplate it!

He was ever in my thoughts, whether I worked or rested, spoke with others, or prayed to God. But above all, of sorrow in the present, and gloom

in the future, rose at times the glorious conviction that come what might of change, I had been, I was loved, passionately loved, and until a woman has known this, her existence has been but a pale reflection of that it might be!

Once more I struggled to resume my former aspect; seclusion depressed rather than soothed Madame, and my own sorrows did not so engross me, that I was indifferent to Catherine's approaching departure.

I was much with her; she too was evidently aware that Colonel Leigh and myself were no longer on the same terms as formerly, nevertheless she frequently introduced his name as though to try me.

Frank Dawson paid us one short visit, and I was delighted to see him look so well, to hear him speak so hopefully.

He was evidently puzzled to account for Colonel Leigh's absence, but did not venture to allude to it.

The good master of Oakdale cheered us once or twice with his presence, of which Captain Fielden was always in some strange manner quite aware, and usually returned with him.

Every thing had resumed its routine, when one morning I was startled, pleased, distressed by a long letter from Reginald. He described himself as unable to endure this sudden and complete break in our intercourse; he said he did not write in any hope of moving me from my determination, but he implored a reply. It was a strange painful letter, an outpouring of his heart.

I told Madame of it; she agreed with me that I ought to reply.

I did so, with all of wisdom and gentleness I could, but I begged him not to write again. There was no use in thus spanning the great gulf which separated us with threads. I felt there was no chance of happiness for him except in total separation, so I forbid him to write any more, and yet looked for a letter.

And he did write. But this time I did not answer.

And time stole on, with swift noiseless flight; my third winter in Canada was almost accomplished.

It was about three weeks after I had received

Reginald's last letter; Madame and myself, the Abbé, and one or two others had assembled at Mrs. Longmore's. I was listening rather apathetically to a disquisition between the latter and Mr. Morrison, one of the governor's chaplains, a good and accomplished man, on the influence of monasteries in the middle ages, when Colonel Leigh and Mr. Dawson were announced. My heart leapt to instant and tumultuous life. It was a rapturous delight to behold him again, yet he looked ill, pale, dark, stern; his manners, I fancied, were less coldly gracious, more abrupt than formerly.

I caught his eye as he entered, but he made no haste to greet me, and first paused long with Madame, with whom he talked eagerly.

Captain Fielden made his way to me, and must have thought my replies strangely confused.

At last Colonel Leigh slowly drew near, speaking to the Abbé on the way, who immediately beckoned Captain Fielden, and the next moment my hand was in Reginald's.

I ought—I intended to have greeted him



coldly, gravely; but I felt that involuntarily, a glad smile played round my lips as I raised my eyes to his.

"Agnes," he said, "you would fain rebuke me for appearing here, but I could not resist the temptation to look on you, and hear your voice again."

"It is a useless increase of pain this meeting," said I, sadly.

"Is it all pain to you?" he asked; "to me it has a large proportion of pleasure."

"If you speak to me here, pray, pray do not choose such topics; I cannot command sufficient composure to reply, without attracting attention."

"Of what else can you and I speak?" he asked. I was silent. "Why will you not write to me?" he resumed in a low tone. "Surely so small a concession need not offend even your severity."

"Such an indulgence is but a lengthening of sorrow to us both," I replied; "and Madame agrees with me."

"What!" exclaimed Reginald, hastily, "you

have confided to Madame Duchênois; I see your object: this was an unnecessary piece of candour."

"It has given me comfort, however," said I, bending over a book, to hide the tears I could not repress.

"This is miserable work, Agnes; you sacrifice us both to a chimera. See me once more to-morrow, and alone."

"I cannot—I will not!" I replied steadily; "you do not know what suffering you cause me: there is no happiness for either of us—at least, no chance of right-doing unless we part. Help me, Reginald, to do well. I have endured much; do not increase my sorrow—try to forget me if—"

"Is this your real wish?" he asked.

I could not reply; my utmost effort only suppressed a sob.

Captain Fielden now returned; and our trying *tête à tête* was broken up.

"Have you any commands for Oakdale, Mrs. Malcolm?" asked my *ci-divant* admirer; "I am going down there to-morrow. I suppose there is no use in asking you to come, Leigh! Quebec has too many charms."

"But Oakdale has its charms too, for a keen sportsman like Colonel Leigh," said I, hastily; "you ought to go—they are always so glad to see you there."

"And *la belle* Eleanor thinks you a mirror of chivalry," added Captain Fielden, in a slightly piqued tone.

"If I go, it will be but for a couple of days. I must be at Amherstburg on the 30th," said Reginald, absently. I met his eyes, and if mine had any power to speak, he must have read the prayer of my heart.

"I have not spoken a word to Madame Duchênois yet," said he, rising hastily and walking towards her.

The rest of the evening passed like a trance; and when we were leaving, Reginald drew my arm through his: "Then you wish me not to remain in Quebec?"

"I wish for what is best for you."

"I shall go with Fielden to-morrow, to Oakdale. I will do whatever you think right and best, if I can thus save you anything."

I pressed his arm in token of gratitude. I

could not speak. "But when—when am I to know the history of your escape from death. I have thought over it incessantly."

"At some future day, when our hearts are calmer, I will write it to you."

He pressed my hand long and fondly in his, muttered "Farewell then," and we parted.

This meeting agitated me much. It retarded my progress towards calm; it demonstrated the truth—the depth of Reginald's attachment to me.

There was no drawback or selfishness to lessen my esteem, and it was very hard to fill my mind so as to exclude the thought of him. Nevertheless, I struggled against indolence and weakness. Music was always a sad remembrancer, and from it my avocations would not let me escape.

Had I been completely, totally separated from Reginald, the task of winning back composure, of submission to God's will, would have been easier. But he occasionally and unavoidably came to Quebec, and tho' I conscientiously kept out of his way, still was ever on the *qui vive* for his coming, dreading to see him, yet disappointed if I did not.

In a monotony of such occupations and sensations, winter disappeared more rapidly than I could have anticipated. Once more we witnessed the return of spring, the breaking of the ice-bound river through its bonds, the note of universal preparation and activity.

Again the port was crowded with shipping, and gradually the first tender green began to displace the snowy mantle, in which earth had been enfolded.

I know not how it was, but that spring was peculiarly sweet to me. True I had a newer and deeper grief than any that pressed upon me during the last, but with it I had the secret, delicious, consciousness of being loved.

But the first fruit of this fresh spring burst was sorrowful to me—dear Catherine and her husband were to sail for England—that England for which I had so deep a dread—yet loved.

It cost me much to bid her good bye—my friend, my preserver, as she had indeed been. It was curious, this gradual departing of those through whose agency I had been conveyed to the shores of Canada, while I remained like the drift

wood, left by some receding wave, without a trace of my former life—a single connecting link with my former existence; and though sad to part with Catherine—I was content. A new life had passed into mine, and absorbed in this master-passion, everything was but secondary.

A twelvemonth had nearly passed away since, on the same spot, I stood gazing after the vessel that bore away Mrs. Grahame and her sweet children, and in that short space of time what a revolution had occurred in the history of my heart, in the history of my inner life.

“You will write to me often,” said Catherine, as we stood together at the place of embarkation, the tears stood in her eyes. “For, dear Agnes, I shall ever remember and love you. Do not think me idly curious; I would not approach the subject were it not that we are about to part. But in your own time you will let me know your history; and why it is you have rejected Colonel Leigh. My question is prompted by sincere interest.”

“Catherine,” I returned with some solemnity, “I promise not to quit this life without leaving

you a full and accurate history of my whole existence, but do not expect it yet."

"At your own time," she replied. "And earnestly do I hope, dearest, there are bright days yet in store for you behind the clouds of the present, whatever they may be."

I sighed. "Do not let the children forget me, even though I may never see them again."

"Nonsense, my dear friend, we will meet in England."

"I shall never set foot on English ground again."

But the moment of embarkation had arrived. A long tearful embrace, a hearty grasp of the hand, an earnest "God bless you," from Mr. Longmore, and I was left standing beside Lady L., who had also come down to see our friends off.

She offered me a seat in her carriage, and as we drove towards the Château Granville, she for a while respected my tears, but this did not last long.

"I don't wonder at your regretting Mrs. Longmore; she was so fond of you. It seems

like yesterday that first evening you came to my house, and when every one was asking who you were, Miss Grahame (she was Miss Grahame then you know) would answer so gently, 'a dear friend of mine.'" Lady L. paused for a moment, and then resumed: "How smitten poor Fielden was with you; what a wild fellow he used to be. Do you know I think he is steadier ever since he upset you into the St. Lawrence. But how is it you have let him go over to that pretty black eyed niece or cousin of Madame Duchênois? He is always asking leave of absence, and going off to the wild woods where she lives."

I had been so engrossed by my own mental struggles that I had heard, or listened to, nothing of this before, and I was immediately roused to deep interest. Eleanor was an object of sincere affection to me, and I stepped from Lady L.'s carriage in a profound fit of musing on Captain Fielden's character, and the probabilities of his making my friend happy.

A month of unbroken monotony ensued. Each day showed more plainly than the last how great a loss we had sustained in Mr. and Mrs.



Longmore. Other friends were kind, attentive, and sociable, but few had the charm of Catherine's manner and character, a suavity that always pleased, and a sincerity you could always trust.

Captain Fielden was often with us. I grew to like him much, though he had a certain levity that at times jarred upon my unstrung nerves. I could perceive a firmness and boldness, together with kindness of heart, beneath this surface glitter.

But of Reginald not a trace remained—he had seemingly vanished. I was most anxious for some tidings of him—his disappearance was unaccountable. I learned so much, that he was at Montreal, occasionally at Buffalo, and several other military stations, but not a line reached me. True I had forbidden him to write, and was satisfied he obeyed my expressed desire, yet it was dreadful to wear out life in this constant restless fever.

What long hours I used to pass striving to read in that favourite window I have described, but really gazing dreamily over “rock and river.” This was always my resort in the evening when “the day was past and gone.”

But unavailing regret, indolent reverie, were ever opposed to my nature and my principles, and I began to look around me for some work which might occupy both head and hands, though the heart was already too full to admit another guest. Nor did I look long in vain. Both the protestant clergyman and Mons. Leclerc found me abundant occupation for whatever time I could spare from Madame. There were poor emigrants to be instructed and assisted, sickly women and poor homeless children to be provided for. In all which work a woman can afford effectual help. Such avocations afforded me relief and distraction. I was not happy, but I was calmer, more reconciled to God and to myself.

Sometimes Madame would exclaim, "*Ma bonne enfant*, you scarce take time to breathe, are you not doing too much?"

"Dear Madame, the time to breathe is exactly what I do not want—let me strengthen myself by labour."

I was one evening beginning to read aloud, as usual, to Madame, a task which, to my joy, I found again growing delightful to me, when

Captain Fielden burst in, looking perfectly radiant. "Good evening, Madame; good evening, Mrs. Malcolm. Have you any parcel or message for Oakdale? I am off in an hour."

"Pray sit down, Captain Fielden, and tell me why you start at such a singular hour—you will be benighted."

"Oh! no matter; my horses know the way pretty well by this time."

"Nevertheless, be persuaded and wait till daybreak."

"Impossible! I have letters from England, and I want to show them to Mr. Earle, and—"

"They contain nothing unpleasant," said I, smiling.

"You are right. By the way, Mrs. Malcolm, the 'Pioneer,' which brought the mail, spoke the 'Gazette' about half way, all well on board. Your friends, the Longmores sailed in the 'Gazette,' did they not?"

"Yes, then they will have reached England by this."

"Oh! decidedly. They say this mail has brought orders for the Rifles to embark for England, they

have been out here a long time, but I do not know how Leigh will like it, yet he must have anticipated the route."

I was speechless, "he must have anticipated the route," he knew then that he must soon leave me for ever, and yet made no attempt to communicate, to see me. Madame, and Captain Fielden continued to speak, I know not of what, for a few minutes, and then he departed as joyously as he entered.

"Agnes, my child, come here," said Madame holding out her hand to me; I knelt down quietly beside her; she passed her hand slowly across my eyes, "Too bitter for tears, far too bitter," she murmured gently. "This is a cruel blow, dear one, but we shall yet think of it, as the incision of the grand Operator to stop the course of a deadly cancer. Total separation, is the only cure for you and for Reginald; would you not wish him to be at rest. Nay, as God strengthens you, would you not wish him to forget in a happier attachment, his unhappy love for yourself; men are not like us, they cannot enshrine a memory in their hearts and offer to it the incense of a life, if they could their

empire must soon pass from them. Deeper and deeper still, dear child, you must plunge into the cold waters of self sacrifice, before you can grasp the pearl, content, that sleeps beneath them."

"But shall I never see him more! my friend, I am still too weak for the heroism you suggest, but I will go seek it in solitude and prayer."

I will not recapitulate the long silent struggles, the lonely agonies with which I wrestled; they exhausted me; I dared not pen a line to Reginald and even if I dared, he had kept silence now too long for my pride to permit me to break it. Thus he might pass from my sight for ever.

Again my strength gave way; the same low fever that before had wasted me returned, yet even physical exhaustion was a relief; I could not struggle, I lay still, and thought, I dare not say that wild regret never darkened my better judgment; that I did not repent having rejected Reginald's proposal.

Some days passed and no tidings reached us from Oakdale. I was sure (when I thought on the subject) that Captain Fielden's errand there was to ask Mr. Earle's consent to his marriage with

his daughter, and I rather expected an announcement of the fact from Eleanor, but no letter reached me.

I was lying languidly on my sofa a few days after Captain Fielden had paid us the hurried visit I describe, when the sound of wheels and the trampling of horses suddenly arrested at the gate, struck my ear. The bell then rang loudly, a faint sound of footsteps and laughter reached me, and a moment after, Eleanor looking as fresh and bright as a wild rose, opened the door gently, as if fearful of disturbing me. I was truly rejoiced to see her, and she embraced me warmly, "but how pale and thin you look, my dear, dear Agnes! and I wanted you to be well and gay for——" a break, a blush, and very becoming embarrassment.

"For you are going to be married," I said smiling; "is not that the reason?"

"Why, who could have told you?" she exclaimed innocently, "I was determined to come myself that no one else should tell you."

I laughed and described Captain Fielden's de-

light and hurry, when he called on his way to Oakdale, and my shrewd conclusion therefrom.

I felt wonderously revived by Eleanor's presence, it was an embodiment of youth, and spring and hope, that had passed into my chamber.

"Are you well enough to rise and dress," asked Eleanor, "for Papa and Harry are longing to see you; and George is with us; poor Madame is quite puzzled, what to do with them all."

"Yes, my love, I can join you quite well, I am better since I heard your voice! leave me now, and I shall be ready within half an hour."

"But I forgot to tell you I am to stay here for a week to—to—buy things, you know!"

"What," I exclaimed; "the wedding clothes already! this is quick indeed, *ma belle*."

"Why you see, Captain Fielden has had a new appointment at Toronto, and must go there soon, and he thinks I had better go with him!"

"Well! and he is quite right; now go, dear."

This break upon the monotony of my life was most agreeable; I was glad to turn to anything that would draw me from myself.

When I descended to the saloon, exhausted by the fatigue of dressing, the extreme warmth and kindness with which I was greeted, was almost too much for me. Mr. Earle came to give me the support of his arm with paternal care; Captain Fielden showed genuine and sincere regret at my pallid looks, while all agreed that the saloon had a deserted air when I was not in it.

I never saw Captain Fielden to such advantage; real happiness sobered him, and he was too much a man of the world, and of good taste, to make any display of attention to his *fiancée*, which would have disconcerted her terribly.

Mr. Earle, Madame Duchênois, and George Earle, did most of the talking; the latter had just got a commission in a local corps, and was full of his uniform.

His father was gravely pleased, though his kindly blue eye would often become suffused as it rested on his gentle daughter, for Eleanor's marriage was more likely to separate her from her family than Marie's. A soldier's *locale* is always uncertain.

Much was discussed with great candour, and



then the gentlemen left us to seek their hotel till dinner-time.

Eleanor had a great deal to tell us, and she had sympathetic listeners; every little heart-history, such as she unfolded, has its mystery, its uncertainty, its gradual growth, its crisis—and to those interested they are the most peculiar that ever occurred; yet Madame and I did not weary of the simple confession, and then we gladdened the heart of our fair young friend by praises of her betrothed; so the time slipped pleasantly away till dinner was ready. To me the glimpse of another's happiness was cheering. I must bear my own allotted fate, but if Reginald could leave me without a word of adieu, this would indeed be the bitterness of death; yet how could I bear that adieu? Or yet more, how could I dream that I should have the same lot of secure affection and home happiness, as the bright young wood nymph, whose dark glossy hair I was braiding into rich folds, as these thoughts glanced through my brain. No! my destiny was moulded after a different form, and I must accept that which I myself had wrought.

I longed, during our social meal, that something might draw forth Reginald's name. I wondered that Madame did not enquire for him. But latterly she abstained from mentioning his name.

The evening was so fine that we ventured to open the window, and I stood leaning against it and inhaling the delicious air. Mr. Earle was persuading, or trying to persuade me, to return with them to Oakdale, as a certain restorative for my health; but I refused, I could not leave Madame and my pupils. "Leave Quebec just now," I thought,—“not for the wealth of worlds.”

As I smiled sadly to myself at the horror with which I viewed the idea of quitting my present abode, I heard some one enter, and many greetings exchanged both in French and English. I recognized the Abbé's voice—he paid us an almost diurnal visit: but the next sound that struck my ear, made me start and draw back the curtain that hid me from the rest. Yes! it was his voice. Reginald was bending over Madame Duchênois' chair; and the old lady's face was all lit up with pleasure.

“It was so stupid of me,” said Eleanor, “but I quite forgot to mention that Colonel Leigh left us yesterday, for Quebec. I believe after all he will marry Miss Harcourt, for—”

But before Eleanor could give her whispered reason, I was addressed by the Abbé; and Reginald, who had not perceived me, looked hastily round at the first sound of my voice, caught my eye, and bowed profoundly: a smile lighted up his countenance, which seemed to me dark and stern for a moment, and then faded away; but he made no attempt to approach me; while I scarce heeded the Abbé’s enquiries, lost as I was in conjecture touching Eleanor’s half-spoken communication. They had just been together under the same roof; and no doubt she was well informed—the approaching departure of his regiment had brought the affair to a climax. The whole scene swam before me, and Madame would say I ought not to regret it.

The Abbé continued speaking: “And you are yet far from convalescent, Madame. You should not stand so long—here is a seat.” The good old man took my hand and led me to a chair.

"You have been ill then," said Reginald, breaking abruptly away from Mrs. Earle and Madame; "you have been ill!"

I could not reply: I could only raise my eyes to his, and drink from thence, an assurance that Emmeline Harcourt was nothing to him.

"Yes," returned the Abbé, for me, "Madame Malcolm has exhausted herself in good deeds; and she is always ill in Quebec, in summer. She should go to Oakdale, and remain till after the wedding festivities."

"Shall you?" asked Colonel Leigh. "I have unbounded faith in the air of Oakdale; it is the sweetest spot on earth, save one, and that still wants an ingredient."

"I must not leave Quebec for some months to come," said I, "then, probably, I shall visit Oakdale."

"Ah! my Colonel," cried Madame, who wished to separate us, "I never was sorry to see you before, but this is a farewell visit I suppose."

"How do you make that out, Madame?"

"Why the Rifles have got the route!"

"True, but I no longer command that regiment."

"What," she exclaimed, "have you exchanged?"

He smiled, and shook his head. "I am no longer in His Majesty's service; I am simply a Canadian settler."

My heart bounded with a wild joy.

"What freak is this?" asked Madame anxiously.

"Did Mr. Earle tell you nothing of my proceedings?" returned Reginald. "I am weary of the sameness of military life, and enamoured of solitude and agriculture."

"I advised him against it, cousin, I assure you," said Mr. Earle to Madame; "I know he will find the loneliness insupportable; but he would not listen, and so I let him have his way, and he bought Belle Vue."

"Bought Belle Vue!" echoed Madame Duchênois.

"Yes," said Reginald, quietly: "Canada is from henceforth my home, my country; I shall make a capital settler."

A confused buzz rose round me, of farming, cattle, horses, marriage, and the Backwoods; but one only clear idea remained with me, Reginald, too, had adopted Canada; we were not to be separated; and compared with what I had before endured, all was *couleur de rose*; yet I was unequal to the variations of feeling through which I had passed; a deadly faintness stole over me, and whispering to Eleanor a good-night, I stole from the room.

How fervently I prayed that night; how gratefully I acknowledged the goodness of God, yet dared I not syllable that for which I was most grateful. Fool that I was: could not the All Seeing read it in my inmost heart!

The next morning Madame Duchênôis sent for me early. I had risen, for I felt wonderfully strong, and longing to taste the morning air.

"Well, my love, and you are better," she began. "I had a long conversation with Reginald after the others left, and Eleanor had gone to bed."

"Indeed, dear friend!"

"Yes; he is very admirable on the whole, Agnes, though he did urge you to commit a fatal

error. He insists on speaking with you, and alone, once more—only once, he says. Will you consent?"

"Ought I—may I?" I asked trembling.

"You may," said she decidedly; "he is in his right mind now; it will soothe and comfort you both; but it should be the last meeting, dear Agnes."

"It shall be the last; at least alone," I returned.

"Reginald will be here to-day at the time Eleanor is to go out with Captain Fielden, and I shall keep my room. He will tell you all his intentions and plans, I need not anticipate them. Now go, dear, you will have need to be alone."

She was right. I had need for self-commune, for decision on my future course before I encountered the strong influence that Reginald always exercised over me.

How could I be grateful enough to that wise but warm friend, whose head was old, while her heart was young—for her wonderful and judicious sympathy! How gently she bore the revelation of my strange history; not shrinking from me as many of her inferiors would have done—as

a sinner, an outcast; how tenderly she wept over my sufferings, and then laid before me the terrible consequences that might have ensued to myself and others, from the dangerous position into which I had brought myself. How solemnly she dwelt on the wondrous manner in which God had guided me safe through difficulties that might well have appalled the bravest!

No! I must cheerfully accept any opportunity of self-sacrifice, and lay down my heart's idol before the command of Heaven.

It was past noon when I was told that Colonel Leigh awaited me in the saloon.

I descended in some trepidation. He was standing by the window, in the same place, in the same attitude as on that day when first we met in Canada. I sighed, and he turned to meet me.

"Agnes! you look ill and worn. I have caused you grief where I would have given you comfort: sit here;" and still holding my hand, he drew me to the sofa, and placed himself beside me.

"And you," I faltered. "How is it with you? and why did you wish to see me?"



"Why," he repeated with a melancholy smile, "you can well imagine. First, to ask your pardon for having vexed and grieved you, by expressing my own wild wishes. I could not resign myself to the bitterness of recovering you only to find an insuperable barrier between us; even now I do not, will not, think it insuperable; but I will not dwell on this topic, I yield to your better judgment: you forgive me, we are at peace, Agnes!"

"Oh! yes, yes. All I ask is to see you happy. I have involuntarily cast a shadow on your life!"

"And coming from you, it is more precious than the utmost brilliancy from another. Tell me what can I do to soothe you, to make up in some way for the griefs that have embittered your bright youth. I will endeavour to be your friend, to *seem* only your friend, if you will sometimes let us meet—sometimes let me gaze upon you, and hear your voice."

"Reginald"—I interrupted. "No, not yet; it would be but a renewing of the struggle. I have not strength for it. Let us part. I shall in

time know peace again, and for you I trust there are bright days before you."

"And," said Reginald, drawing closer to me, "can you, in truth, desire me to forget you?"

"I am very weak, but"—raising my eyes to his—"No, Reginald, I cannot yet say forget me."

"God bless you, dearest!" exclaimed Reginald.

"But," I resumed, "your renunciation of your military career makes me uneasy. I dread your being totally unfit by nature and habit for the life you have chosen—think of the loneliness, the ——"

"I shall have more time for what you so much recommend, self commune. My mind has been wrought to too high a pitch by my late sufferings, to endure the puerilities of drawing-room and mess-room life. The free air, the wholesome exercise of labour, the interest of my own possessions, all will serve to restore my moral health. At Oakdale, I shall have society within reach, and, for an object, I shall beautify a home for you, beloved, and hope, hope on, to see you fill it yet."

I turned away to hide the irrepressible tears

which sprang to my eyes, partly at the indescribable sweetness of his tone, partly at the idea, "and when the home is made, and the object has worked its cure, you will fill it with a younger, fairer wife, who will bring with her no dowry of terrible memories, no secret past, to shadow the present;" but I did not speak my thoughts. I said, "Do so then, and may your anticipations be fulfilled."

"But this is not all I propose to myself. I shall not be a mere master to those I employ. I shall endeavour to make Belle Vue the nucleus of many homes. In this your heart will be with me—will it not, my Agnes? though something of distance divides us."

I could only reply by tears. "And," he continued, "I shall hear of you through our friends, and sometimes we may meet, and though surrounded by others, a look, a hand pressure, may speak our spirits' truth. Nothing could make me renounce the land you have chosen. Do I satisfy you, Agnes, and will you ever believe that you are my first object, though I must not repeat the assurance?"

"I promise to be as I am now, perfectly satisfied, resting in your truth. Yet do not think yourself bound to me—you are free as air. Let us not weaken each other by promises; but each seek to render the other happy by a steadfast perseverance in the right way—let us live for higher ends than happiness alone!"

"There are better things than enjoyment, even on earth," murmured Reginald, thoughtfully.

"It is a God-sent conviction; and now, leave me."

"Not yet," he returned; "when am I to know your marvellous history—for marvellous it must be, even from Madame Duchênais' sketch of it. By Heaven! you are a glorious creature—what daring, what resolution, what truth and tenderness; and all these within my reach, yet must not be mine!"

"They are yours," said I brokenly, through my sobs, "all yours."

"I did not mean to make you weep, dear one, and I dare not kiss away those tears; again forgive me; you would have been happier had we not met."

"No, Reginald! freedom from suffering would not atone for the grand gift of love; besides, I know each phase of sorrow. But *you* had had no grief but for me."

"And I, too, accept the gift; come what may in its train, existence however painful is great and glorious compared with annihilation."

"Farewell then," said I, feeling my strength, moral and physical, failing me. "Let us be worthy of each other, and the hereafter to which we are journeying."

"So be it," he said and paused, raising my hand to his lips, "Farewell, farewell." He lingered yet a moment, turned, and left me.

I wept long in the solitude of my own chamber, but my tears were gentle. The interview with Reginald was inexpressibly soothing to me. I felt he would be happy in his new life, and not very far from me (though I endeavoured to suppress this last thought). He was, as Madame said, in his right mind, and for the present this would suffice. Future trials would find their own strength.

I joined the dinner party wonderfully calm

and strengthened; I could even name Reginald, and listen with quiet pleasure to dear Mr. Earle's solemn eulogiums on him; his self gratulations on having him for a neighbour, and his slight regrets that he had not another daughter for him.

"I am glad I was in time," remarked Captain Fielden coolly, "or it would have been all over with me."

"Nay, but he must marry now he has settled," said Mr. Earle simply.

Compared with the restless misery of the last few months, I was now happy and at rest.

Moreover, I was abundantly employed for nearly a fortnight; dear Eleanor was our guest, during that time I was constantly her adviser and assistant, in the various purchases she required.

Madame and I found it very difficult to avoid going to Oakdale for this second marriage. But we were firm, especially Madame, who was a strong advocate for my total separation from Reginald; at last we persuaded our kind friends that the marriage could go on without us, and we were excused.

Yet I was grieved to refuse the pretty bride-elect. She parted with us tearfully, and we saw her as Eleanor Earle, no more.

"I am almost glad she is gone, dear child," said Madame, as we settled to our usual employments, the evening of the day she left us. "I am almost weary of saying no; and I want you all to myself, Agnes."

"I should like to have been present at her wedding, if it were possible," I returned.

"We have had no real communication since you spoke with Reginald; now that we are quiet tell me what he said?" she asked.

I did so readily. I had been wishing to have the benefit of her counsel. She listened attentively, with a few well-put occasional queries.

"I am pleased with you both, my love," she said, at the end of my recital; "and Reginald's plans and intentions are excellent, but you must not deceive yourself; the object he proposes to himself, will suffice to interest him, his mind will recover its tone; and then, dear Agnes, the present predominant feeling will fade away: the animal portion of man's nature is strong—a hope

a dream, will not suffice him; he will first grow content, then weary of solitude. The image of his early love having faded from his heart, the next fair, bright, kindly, young creature he meets, will be welcomed; then you will be supplanted, and his home complete."

"Even so I have anticipated," I replied, steadily.

"That is well; but you have not kept it before your eyes, or I should not hear so happy a tone in your voice—a tone I love to hear—yet, I must be cruel, for if you permit vague hopes to nestle in your heart, it will be a severer task to eradicate them than to prevent their growth; moreover, you would not have Reginald sink into a dreamer—a morbid being anticipating an impossible good—you could not wish this. No! you must help him to attain the end you now dread, by steadily abstaining from his society, and showing a quiet cheerfulness, which will let his pity sleep."

"You set me a stern task," said I coldly, for I revolted from the word pity.

"Not too hard a one for your spirit," re-



turned my friend. "If there was any other chance whereby your happiness might be secured, I would not seem so exclusively to consider his. But banish illusion for a moment and think of reality: you are a wife; the solemn vow of marriage still binds you; therefore, it is impossible you can dream of union with Reginald, unless you also desire another's death—the death of one you have already injured. Will you let yourself desire that a living soul shall be hastened to its eternal doom, to secure you a few years' doubtful happiness?"

"God forbid!" I exclaimed, appalled at the truths she laid bare before me. "I shall be in all things guided by you; I will not delude myself. Let us not name the subject again."

"I shall make no rash promise, dearest Agnes, I shall watch, and administer the bitter tonic of advice if I think it necessary."

"Do so, my valued friend, if it seems good to you."

Madame's stern exposition of my realities cost me much, but I recognised its justice, and determined to follow her advice; yet I could not be

unhappy. No; the echo of Reginald's tone as he asked me, "Will you ever believe that you are my first object?" though I must not repeat the assurance, still lingered in my ear, strive how I might, not to listen to its music. Nevertheless, I kept myself very busy, and read grave books, and renounced poetry.

But oh! those heavenly evenings, the unutterable tender beauty of early spring; the delicate perfume of the opening blossoms; the thrilling, happy, fresh-woke song of the birds; there was contagious softness in Heaven and earth. How often, as I strove to fix mind and eye upon the profound pages of some philosophic book, Belle Vue, clothed in all the loveliness of this delicious season, rose before me; and I saw Reginald resting, after the day's work, on the terrace before the cottage, and looking down the beautiful lake, with its lovely islands, clad in the exquisite verdure of spring. Had he any one near to whom he could utter the words I knew would spring to his lips? Then I would chase away the vision, and endeavour to engross my mind in some other subject.

Marie and her husband came to stay with us a few days after the wedding. Every one had looked well, and Oakdale wore its brightest aspect. There was a smaller party assembled than at Marie's marriage, as Captain Fielden had no relatives in Canada. His only friends on the occasion were Sir Henry and Lady L——, and Colonel Leigh.

The whole party had gone over to luncheon at Belle Vue, a few days after, and already the place was in all the confusion of improvements. Marie said her father was enchanted with all Reginald's plans, and prophesied great things of him. Victor was never happy unless at Belle Vue.

"And I think," added Marie laughing, "my sister-in-law, Henriette, is of the same opinion; she is quite *épris* with your grave friend."

"Would she make him a suitable wife, Marie? asked Madame.

"It is impossible to say. He does not think of her."

Weeks lengthened into months, in our quiet life; imperceptibly, noiselessly the sands of time

were running out; once I saw Reginald, he came to Quebec on business, and brought Victor with him. He came to see Madame, and made not the slightest attempt to speak with me alone. But he looked better than when we parted, calmer, and more at rest. He described his improvements, his wild forest life pleasantly to Madame, and scarce spoke a word to me. It was not necessary; I drew long draughts of assurance from his deep eyes, though I scarce permitted myself to meet them. Again Madame checked me for the happiness too perceptible in my voice.

When Reginald left us, he begged Madame, should a letter reach her from his sister, directed to him, to keep it, as he wished to give Madame the benefit of its contents. "I expect a terrible jeremiad over my voluntary exile," he concluded, "for she does not know how to direct to me, and will be sure to write here."

This visit over, we again sunk into monotony. I was cheered by a long and charming letter from dear Catherine. She and her husband had only been in time to close his father's eyes, and

she wrote from Major Grahame's house, at Woolwich. Her account of my ex-pupils interested me much, though I was not quite content with the description of their progress. A postscript, in Mrs. Grahame's feeble hand, expressed much kindly feeling, and a strong wish to return to Quebec. "As to yourself, dear Mrs. Malcolm, I always expected you to turn out a countess in disguise at least, and I am quite disappointed to find that Catherine had nothing to tell me," she concluded.

Beautiful brilliant June was almost over—a year had elapsed since Reginald had arrived in Canada—three years since I had left my husband. I spent the anniversary of that day in solemn converse with my kind and venerable friend, and at its conclusion, I felt strong enough for any sacrifice.

It was long since we had heard from Oakdale. Henriette de Lille was still there; no word had reached us of Reginald. I had begun to arrange my future.

While Madame was spared to me, *there* was my first duty; and after, could I not find work

enough to occupy me; I would always have a home of my own, lonely though it might be. While I thought that Oakdale, and the young households connected with it, would have a welcome for me—and Belle Vue, when it had grown into a household—I paused long on the thought before I could advance a step. Yes! even at Belle Vue, when my hair was white, and my eyes dim, I might listen calmly to the laugh of children—yet I would not have Henriette de Lille for his wife—no! nor Emmeline Harcourt! Who then would I permit him to marry? There was no reply.

But the long perspective of years, which stretched out before me, ere time would have dulled my feelings and numbed my spirit to cheerfulness and repose!

I shrank from the dreary void. Again a restlessness I could scarce resist crept over me. I longed intensely to visit Oakdale, to go away somewhere. I found it impossible to restrain my desire for movement. At this time a letter reached me from Emmeline Harcourt—she was very ill, she said, worse than those about her

imagined. She would give worlds for a conversation with me, could I but go to her.

As, however, there was no word of invitation from her parents, I could not of course comply. I wrote as kindly as possible, and for some days forgot the gentle invalid in the pleasure of seeing Captain Fielden and Eleanor. They were a youthful pair to begin the world's cares; so bright, and joyously thoughtless. It seemed a mockery to call dear Eleanor Mrs. Fielden; they were too much absorbed in each other to be very sociable, and soon left us for Oakdale.

I do not know how it is, I am thus dwelling on the trivialities of my every-day life; whether it is to convey to your mind an idea of the period that elapsed since Reginald first spoke to me of love, or to give myself time to think before I plunge into the details which ensue.

A few days after the Fieldens had left us, the post brought a thick letter from Mrs. Oldham to Madame Duchênois; it contained one to Reginald, and was full of natural regret at her brother's determination to settle in such a distant part of the world; she had been in Paris in the spring,

and found his letters on her return. She concluded by imploring Madame to explain the sort of mystery that hung over Reginald's conduct and motives, "he was always a strange creature, but *this* whim is utterly deplorable."

"That request I must not comply with," said Madame with a sigh: "put Reginald's letter in your writing book that it may not be mislaid, and tell Eleanor when you write that it is here; he might like it forwarded."

I obeyed, and received an almost immediate reply. Colonel Leigh had been suddenly called away to Detroit; Miss Harcourt was rapidly sinking; and the General had sent an express for Reginald.

I was much moved; was it that her parents imagined his presence would restore her to health? and had not miracles been wrought before by the presence of one beloved. If this was the case, how would Reginald act? Touched by the poor girl's evident attachment, feeling the loneliness of his life, his affection for myself already worn by absence, what more likely than that he should make all parties happy by wedding his cousin.



So said Madame Duchênois, and I persuaded myself I thought so too.

A week passed over, and still the letter lay on my writing table; I used to look at it and con the well-known name, "Colonel Reginald Leigh."

That letter haunted me; I was always betrayed by it into a reverie; I connected it with his actual presence. He was to come for it. How should I find him? affianced to Miss Harcourt, or ——

Whenever I sat down to write, to copy a favorite passage or to note the day's events, that letter was under my hand, hide it away as I might it ever came uppermost.

A few days after I had received her note, Eleanor interrupted me most unexpectedly, as I was practising in one of the lower rooms.

"My dear Mrs. Fielden you are a perfect Will-o'-the-wisp, you fly about so suddenly, whence do you come?"

"Directly from Lady L.'s, but yesterday from Oakdale; and dear Agnes you are still looking delicate! Lady L. is with Madame, she wants you to dine with us to-day."

Eleanor had much to tell, and more to urge in favour of our return with them to Oakdale; I felt much inclined to yield, for now that Reginald was away, the desire to look on the scene of his labours, was nearly irresistible; I was glad too, to mix a little in society, some newly arrived acquaintances of Lady L.'s, the Fieldens and ourselves formed the dinner party.

They had much news to tell of the political and social changes, in England.

The giant power of steam was then but in its infancy, and perhaps there was not one amongst us, capable of foreseeing the mighty, yet silent revolution it would create. No! imagining little beyond our own condition, we talked of Louis Philippe, and his sudden establishment, as likely to last; his pacific influence to connect England and France indissolubly; I remember the good Abbé who came in the evening, taking a huge pinch of snuff as he listened to the crude conjectures of the military politicians; "Bah!" he said, "Louis Philippe will fall as suddenly as he rose, and France and England will never really be friends till their sons have fought side by side."

His prognostications were laughed at.

Colonel Leigh's retirement from the service was freely discussed, he was known to almost all present. It was deplored as madness, and praised as a sensible act, according as the speakers' minds inclined them; Major Darrell, a sensible agreeable person who had handed me down to dinner, and sought me with flattering attention afterwards, said he believed Leigh would be happier in his new life than people imagined; "He never liked the amusements or cared for the pursuits that engrossed most men; he would have been a happier man if he had been the youngest of a curate's large family, and obliged to work his way with toil."

"I am sure you are right," I exclaimed.

"Well, Miss Harcourt will not make the best wife for a Canadian settler," said a young officer just come down from Detroit. "They say she is much better. and is to be married to Colonel Leigh in three weeks."

But no one seemed to heed the remark, save myself; a new topic was started, and Reginald's name mentioned no more.

For long hours after the silence of night had settled on the Château Granville, I sat at my window that the soft fresh breeze might cool my brow, summoning the holiest tenderest images of the past to contend with those of the present. I thought much of him who had wrought me so much suffering; of my own shortcomings towards him. Yet I thanked Heaven that I should never see him more; while, from my heart, I frankly forgave him.

But despite my strong effort to suppress it, I was intensely anxious to know something more positive of Reginald; perhaps he waited some communication from me—perhaps I ought to write to entreat him not to think of me, if his happiness and that of another could be secured by his marriage.

“I could not—I ought not to be anything to him. Yes,” I murmured, “I will write ere I sleep—while there is no eye to watch me.” I turned to my dressing table and took a light; descended softly to the drawing room and placed myself at my table, and there lay that letter, with the oft conned direction uppermost. That

letter, which was a sort of link between me and all I cared for on earth. Reginald and my kind friend, who had helped me to soothe my mother's last moments—and he was to call for it. Had I not better wait and see? How much had often been ruined by precipitancy!

I closed my writing book and retired strangely composed.

Madame Duchênois loved to exercise a simple hospitality. She invited Sir Harry and Lady L—, our young married couple—the Abbé and a few others, to a *soirée*; she was in tolerable spirits, for I was too proud to let her think me pining—whatever God sent, could I not bear it without a perpetual and cowardly appeal for sympathy and compassion!

I decked our rooms with flowers, and dressed myself with care; all those invited, came, and with them, Major Darrell, whom Sir Harry begged leave to bring. Our social habit was always to have tea and coffee laid on a table where I presided—as it generally formed a sort of rallying point. Eleanor offered to assist me; and met the various witticisms about her commencing to

practise housewifery duties, with spirit and gaiety.

Sir Harry, with a couple of old French ladies, and the Abbé, had already organized a whist table, and Madame and Lady L—— were deep in some choice morsel of gossip, when Reginald walked in quietly as though he had been an inmate of the house. I could not repress a sudden start and low exclamation; and seeing Madame engaged he came first to me.

“I am fresh from Detroit,” he said, “and had no idea Madame had a reception this evening; will you excuse a travelling costume?”

I bowed silently, not yet daring to trust my voice.

“Of course you must be excused—doubly excused,” said Major Darrell laughing, as he shook hands with him: “first, as a backwoodsman; and secondly, as—but,” added the Major, interrupting himself, “how is Miss Harcourt?”

“Oh! better, much better,” returned Reginald hastily; and crossing to Madame he was soon in deep and apparently agreeable conversation with her and Lady L——.

The hours sped on; we had music and conversation, and card playing, but still Reginald did not return to me. I was in an agony of curiosity: was he or was he not free? Yet I avoided his eye, and endeavoured to converse coherently with Major Darrell.

The fever of my heart brought a flush to my cheek, while the tension of my nerves lent an unnatural lustre to my eyes, as I laughed and argued or agreed with those around me. I saw, without meeting it, that Reginald's glance sought me; and unable longer to sustain the exertion of talking connectedly, I placed myself at the piano, and began to play old Scotch and Irish airs, such as all know, and can link with some associated ideas.

I was soon surrounded and pressed to sing, but that I represented was quite beyond my strength; they still urged me, but to my surprise Colonel Leigh's voice was heard taking my part. "She has been far from well," he said to Eleanor, "do not let her attempt it."

Eleanor, though in a great fright, agreed to supply my place, and I stood by her, sometimes

throwing in a note, and feeling that Reginald was beside me. When she had finished, Lady L—— came up to express her satisfaction at the performance, and then Major Darrell and Captain Fielden began rather noisily to press her ladyship to play some particular reel in which she excelled.

While this was going on Reginald said in a low tone, "Madame tells me you have a letter of mine."

"Yes; shall I give it you."

"If you please."

I moved from the group round the piano to the writing table, on which stood as usual a lamp and a vase of flowers. They were hot-house flowers given me by the Abbé. I took the letter and turned back, but Reginald had followed me.

"I heard from Miss Harcourt some time ago," said I tremblingly. "She wrote in the depression of ill-health. How did you leave her?"

"Half her malady is fancy and over indulgence. I left her better than you are, Agnes. There is a feverish brilliancy in your eyes that ——"



"Hush," I interrupted fearfully, "I am well, quite well," and I turned to go.

"One moment—only one moment," said Reginald, detaining me gently. "You do ~~not~~ know how charming the aspect of this room is to me after my own rude residence. What delicious flowers!" he continued, bending over them. "You always have flowers about you. Ah! here is a favourite of mine," and plucking a sprig of oak-leaved geranium, he offered it to me.

My heart swelled with rapture as I took it. I knew all he remembered, all he intended to say. I ought to have looked stern and cold, and forbidding; but, in spite of myself, a happy smile played round my lips. I left him and returned to my place amongst our guests.

Colonel Leigh remained at the writing table, and after a few minutes, seeing that every one was occupied, he broke the seal and began to read.

In this position I ventured at times, amid the current of talk about me, to look at him. Certainly his countenance had grown softer than formerly—something of the cold proud look had

worn off—there was more earnestness, more sadness, less hauteur.

But while I speculated thus a change in the expression struck me—a sudden flash of rapture lit his face, a look of supreme but startled delight, and the next instant he covered his brow with his hand, as if to hide his joy from all beholders.

In vain I thought over this—I could find no solution. I was called away to bid good night to some of our departing guests, and when I returned, I heard Reginald's voice in wild gaiety and laughter. I almost started at the sound—it jarred upon me with a sort of dread—yet he did not approach me.

He waited to the last, and no sooner were we alone than, regardless of Madame's presence, he seized my hand, and exclaimed—

“Agnes! I have strange tidings. I know not how to communicate them—read this, dearest, before you sleep, and I will be with you early to-morrow. Beloved one, you *are free!*” and putting the letter in my hand, without another word, he left me.

Madame had been at the far end of the room, and only partially heard what passed.

"I am very tired, *chère*, I will go to bed; I think we had a successful evening. What was it that Reginald said about to-morrow?"

"That he will be here."

"Take care, love, be firm."

I smiled and kissed her, and still grasping the letter tightly, I flew to my chamber, and securing the door, proceeded in trembling haste to peruse this magic missive; he said I was free. The commencement was full of regrets and reproaches, then came family matters; further on gossip of mutual acquaintance; still I read on, in an agony of doubt, fear, hope, impatience, at last the name of Gresford struck my eye.

"We are unusually dull this summer, as dear Lady Gresford had been called to town in consequence of the rather sudden death of her brother-in-law, the husband of that beautiful girl who destroyed herself at Chamouni."

The paper fell from my hand: what a mingled tide of sensation and emotion swept over my soul. But the first was solemn awe. The account

between us was closed; I could make him no amends; I could reproach him no more; he stood no longer at the bar of human judgment.

How had he died? Had his spirit passed to its final doom, still choked and overgrown with 'the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches;' or was there any to speak truth to him of eternal realities—to point to Heaven and fill the place I had deserted?

Never had I felt thoroughly penitent till now; but now I would have given much—all—no, not all—nearly all I hoped, to have closed his eyes.

Oh! what terrible force is there in the silent rebuke of death. Who does not feel the impotence, the blasphemy, of revenge, when the great Universal Creditor claims his just due, and calmly gathers the object of your hatred to His harvest, far away out of your reach, there to be tried by different rules from those by which you would condemn him; while a thousand temptations you could not appreciate, a thousand palliating ignorances and good deeds your narrow, blinded, vision could not see, are mercifully cast

into the scale, wherein you, too, ere the dark fire of hatred has well died out in your heart, will be weighed, and found wanting.

Long and deeply I thought over the unexpected tidings: earnestly and fervently I prayed for mercy and forgiveness, striving diligently to keep out the ray of rapturous delight that, spite of regret and penitence, was flooding my heart with golden light.

I shuddered, too, when I remembered Reginald's look of joy when he read of this man's death. He had no memory of duties neglected, and vows broken. And then was not that joy an indication of his deep love for me. How should I meet him to-morrow?

Yes! happiness is more difficult to bear than sorrow.

Morning had dawned before I thought of retiring to rest. At last, worn out in the struggle between sincere penitence, and a sense of joy and liberty I dared not indulge, I fell asleep.

The day had begun before I opened my eyes to its light; and I sprang up with a bewildering sense of what had occurred: my first sensation

was fear; the next—I must not disguise it, the most strange delicious sense of freedom.

The world, the future, were transformed for me. I could not yet compose myself to see Madame: she was breakfasting in her own room, much fatigued, she said, and begged me to repose myself.

But repose was not yet for me. I trembled to meet Reginald; and strove to tone down my mind by thinking over the solemn fact, that I was a widow.

I had always worn a sort of half-mourning: in which, the only colour I permitted to mingle, was violet.

I now sought out a heavy black silk, and divested myself of the white lace that used to lighten my sombre toilette. I braided back my hair, and rendered my garb as suitable as I could. I had scarce finished this arrangement, when I was told Colonel Leigh was in the salon.

I entered slowly, gravely. Reginald sprang to meet me, but I shrank, half frightened at the joy he betrayed. “Oh! Reginald,” I exclaimed, “remember, it is over death we rejoice.”

“I only know that you are free. Oh! dear Agnes, it is enough to forgive all that is past. Do not let shadows scare away the happiness Heaven has sent us. Fear nothing—doubt not—but share in my rapturous anticipations.”

And with him, all *was* soon forgotten. Long hours glided by and still we talked. I told him my whole history. I dared to rest my aching head against his shoulder; and feel utterly, completely at peace.

No more loneliness nor solitude of heart for me.

Never, oh! never can I recall those hours, without a grateful memory of the exquisite care with which he forbore to speak too much of joy, until he had won me from my self accusations; gradually the knowledge grew upon me that I was no more my own—that before a vow had been exchanged, the mystic union, the true marriage bond of heart with heart, had been indissolubly linked. How deeply in my innermost soul did I deplore and wonder at my violation of that holy sacrament, for let rival churches call it as they may, it is a true sacrament of the spirit.

At last, Madame, surprised and anxious at my long absence, interrupted our *tête à tête*. I begged her forgiveness of my neglect in not sooner seeking her; and left to Reginald the task of enlightening her as to the present state of affairs. They were long closeted together, and when I rejoined them, the kind old lady kissed me and blessed me.

“My child, if you have erred you have suffered much, and God in His goodness has reconciled you to Himself; enjoy with thankfulnes, the mercy He vouchsafes.”

After much of discussion, it was agreed, that Reginald should write himself to Lady Gresford, and learn from her all the particulars I longed to know. It was not unnatural he should do so, and until her reply reached us, I refused to listen to a word of immediate marriage. Seeing that I shrank from the idea as monstrous, Reginald yielded to my wishes, and it was agreed that we should spend the intervening time at Oakdale, as we had been so often pressed to pay a long visit there.

The near neighbourhood of Belle Vue, would



enable Colonel Leigh to continue his newly begun buildings and improvements, without cutting him off from our society. At his request I was to inform Mrs. Earle and the whole family of our engagement.

The letter of enquiry was written before we separated that day, but two months at the shortest computation must elapse, before an answer could be received, and I was perfectly content it should be so. Reginald would be constantly with me, we should have time to calm down after the excitement of suffering, and surprise.

Never shall I forget the friendly welcome that awaited us at Oakdale; I had written to Mrs. Earle, all that it would have been a little awkward to say, and her hearty complete and motherly satisfaction, was not to be exceeded even by her husband's honest warmth.

Eleanor, Captain Fielden, and Reginald accompanied us down, and dear Madame Duchênois was so strong, from the mingled relief and joy she felt at the near accomplishment of her favorite scheme, that she bore the journey in one day marvellously well.

We were a most happy party. Never, oh! never did nature look so lovely in my eyes. For the first time for years I was completely happy; and the natural leaning of my heart was to deep enjoyment.

No bird that warbled its evening song of praise to its Maker, poured forth a more rapturous tribute of gratitude for joy, untinged by the slightest alloy than I did, morning and night before my God.

It was my frequent habit to ride with Reginald to Belle Vue; he used to go about among his *employés*, while I attempted to sketch my beautiful new home; already I felt it was mine, and I was so completely at rest with Reginald; I loved to remark the peculiarities of his character; there, firmness and softness so strangely blended, and energy, with a certain indolent refinement, and now that all reserve between us was gone, what high aspirations, what curious doubts he confided to me!

And the future—how often it was our theme, nor did we dwell upon it selfishly. No; many

a loved friend figured in our picture. Madame Duchênois was always to be our honoured inmate; our mother—she had, laughingly, half consented.

Thus sweetly, gently, with friendly intercourse and hearts at rest, more than two months elapsed.

Eleanor and her husband had left us. Mons. and Madame de Lille had come in their place; and though no letter had reached us, yet a note of preparation had evidently been sounded by Mrs. Earle, for we were to be married at Oakdale.

It was a glorious evening towards the middle of September, just three years after I had landed in Canada—Reginald had been at Quebec, and expecting his return, I had strolled down to the fountain I have before described, knowing he would seek me there. All the earth was glowing with the unspeakable glories of autumn. I sat there a good while, dreaming, listening to the splash of the water, the sleepy note of the birds, when Reginald came up quickly. There was an air of triumphant joy in his bearing, that prepared me for his words, as he threw himself beside me.

“It is come—my own love!” he exclaimed,

drawing forth a letter. "We will read it together."

The seal was still unbroken, and gathering me close to him, we commenced the perusal.

How my heart beat at the sight of Lady Gresford's well-remembered firm writing.

She had few particulars to communicate of Mr. Millar's death: his daughters—still unmarried—were both with him, and she had not seen him for a long time. "From all I can collect," she went on to say, "he was much altered and broken since the strange death of poor Agnes, and well he might—for, despite the duty of silence towards the errors of the dead, I cannot refrain from remembering and observing on the cruel tortures which his selfishness inflicted on her young spirit. What agonies of despair—what intolerable anguish she endured—I only partly knew; and she never complained. So lofty, so tender, so true, and pure—may God pardon her if she was indeed driven to self-destruction. I ever blame myself for having left her, and would give many a hope to be assured of her present state. The tears still

stand in my poor Mary's eyes when she speaks of her dear mother—the only mother, poor child, she ever knew. Thank you, for your kind remembrance of my poor friend. Hers is the darkest page I ever turned in the book of life, and the feeling that I did not exert myself for her as I might, often weighs me down with self-reproach.”

My tears fell fast upon the paper as I read these lines. “And I shall never never be able to set her mind at rest,” I murmured. “Ah! Reginald, is it not sad?”

“And why not in after and happier years confide your history to her,” he asked; “depend upon it she would keep your secret.”

I was silent, but I liked the idea—as his wife, I would have courage for anything.

“And now,” resumed Reginald, “there need be no more delay; you see how completely this letter absolves you from any debt of observance towards that—that source of so much sorrow; who is now no more! Oh! Agnes, your future, dearest, shall repay the past.”

The evening was closing in when we returned,

and we found the house in some commotion; some runaway blacks, a man and woman, with their little boy, had been found by Victor, in a state of exhaustion and terror, in the forest. They had fled from an American settlement near the British frontier, where they said a gang of "sympathisers" had committed fearful atrocities, and had especially wreaked their vengeance on the free blacks: declaring them to be runaway slaves, and using them accordingly.

Of course Victor brought them back with him, and the poor creatures were almost delirious with delight, at finding themselves safe, sheltered, fed, and clothed. Colonel Leigh questioned them closely as to the position and movements of the marauding gang they described, despatched a report of their proceedings to the General at Québec, and recommended Mr. Earle to look to his guns and ammunition.

It was highly improbable, however, that they would venture so far into the country, as their destruction would be inevitable; and Colonel Leigh's communication would cause their further progress to be intercepted.

The preparations for the wedding, were not unnecessary, for I found everyone agreed that there was no reason why it should not take place the ensuing week.

The days which succeeded, were a strange, busy, exciting *mélange*. I was calm and grave, however. A letter from dear Eleanor announced that they would contrive to be with us the day before the ceremony. The Abbé and Mr. Oliphant, the governor's chaplain, were to arrive the same day.

Mr. Earle's kind face was lit up with satisfaction at the idea of another house full, and another wedding. He was one of those rare ones, in whose heart there is ever a welcome and a home, for whoever wants either.

In the midst of Mrs. Earle's preparations, Frank Dawson rode up, in the highest spirits, and was instantly more at home than the owners of the establishment. He called loudly for me, and when I appeared shook hands with me half a dozen times.

"Faith! you have not a friend in the world that would rejoice over any luck happening to

you as much as myself. Sure you've been my guardian angel, and saved me twice over; but I have been looking out for a summons these six months, ever since the Colonel came to me at Detroit.- What has delayed you?"

It was a great pleasure to see Reginald's cordial manner to poor Frank; they were great friends, and a most amusing contrast.

The third day before the wedding was to take place, I rode over to Belle Vue for the last time until I should go there as its mistress. It was such an evening as shall not easily fade from my memory, the golden glories of the sunset, the lake, its beauteous islands, the purple mountains, the dark forest; and Reginald's mood, too, was peculiarly sympathetic with my own; we were gravely happy. Victor and Frank Dawson, who accompanied us, considerately kept together. As we turned to look at the lake before taking our homeward road, the rays of the setting sun lit up the Island of the Tombs, and Reginald reminded me of our expedition to it the year before, "when we were almost strangers to each



other, Agnes; does it not seem an anomaly that you and I could ever have been strangers?"

I smiled, and breathed a silent thanksgiving.

"That Island of the Tombs is a sweet spot," resumed Reginald: "I do not wonder that former tenant of Mr. Earle's should have chosen it as his daughter's last resting-place. I would rather like such a last home myself."

I did not like his words, and asked some questions about his sister, which changed the conversation.

The next day he had again occasion to go over to Belle Vue, and as much was to be arranged he determined to sleep there; Frank agreed to go with him. There was a large party of men at work on the house and grounds, many of them regular *employés* of Mr. Earle's; they had accomplished the principal alterations, and Reginald wished to pay and dismiss them, and return the following day to meet Eleanor and Captain Fielden on their return.

He therefore started early with Frank, and I strolled to the door to see them off. Frank, as

usual impatient, rode away at once, and, calling "come, Colonel, come;" but Reginald paused a moment, and breaking off a branch of jasmine said smiling, "a parting gift, love," as he suddenly clasped me to his heart, and pressed his lips to mine, leaving me startled and half angry with him for so much demonstration in so unsuitable a locality.

The day passed rapidly, it was intensely hot as the night closed darkly; vivid flashes of summer lightning illumined the sky.

The oppressive warmth rendered us less talkative and sociable than usual. The hour for retiring had come, and I was in the act of bidding Mr. Earle good night, when a confused sound of rapid and numerous footsteps, mingling voices, a general rush in short, startled us, and almost immediately the door burst open, and servants, labourers, even the cattle drovers, whose cottages were at a good distance, rushed with affrighted looks into the room.

"What is it?" said Mr. Earle.

"Oh, Sir, the States-men!"

"The sympathisers are burning all before them and coming this way."

"Ay, Massa, hundreds and hundreds of them," chorussed men, women, and children, black and white.

"Yes, Sir," said a respectable man, a sort of care taker, "Black Tom's little boy was out after one of the cows that went astray, and overheard them in the forest, where they had bivouaced all night; they were eating and drinking, and swearing to burn out the Britishers at Oakdale that sheltered runaways. The little fellow says there were a hundred of them."

"That's too much," returned Mr. Earle gravely. "I wish we had the Colonel here and Frank, and most of the men are at Belle Vue."

"Father," cried Victor, "let me ride over for them? I know the way well."

His mother clasped her hands.

"No, boy, not you, it is not right you should." "Ben," (this was to the man who gave the account of the marauders,) will you venture it? Tell them to mount as many as they can, and let the rest come up a-foot."

"Ay, Sir."

"Start at once, then; stay did you bring your rifle and powder?"

"All I had, Sir,"

"Good; leave them then, and Victor, bring Ben my pistols. How many guns have we?" There was some delay, and then Ben stated there was one to each man and three to spare. "Very well," returned the master; "now, as to ammunition; we have not a great deal, but enough I hope to keep those devils at bay till help comes; we must try to prevent them firing the house."

But while he spoke, a fierce yell, at no great distance, sent the blood curdling back to our hearts.

"They're coming up fast, and there are a good many of them," cried Victor, running in; "they are advancing on the left wing of the house."

"Then you must not venture to the stables, Ben," said Mr. Earle; "drop down the ravine from the back of the house, and make your way afoot."

Ben nodded, and darted off.

Mr. Earle now mustered the men—they amounted, including Henri de Lille, to nine—with a large proportion of women and children.

I felt calm, but intensely terrified—quieted by fear. Mr. Earle directed the women to retire to the stone-built portion of the house, which could be longer defended. Fortunately that end, by which the marauding gang were approaching, was two stories in height, and having hastily barricaded the lower windows and all the doors, Mr. Earle went to the upper windows, which commanded their approach.

“Let me go,” I urged, unable to stay quiet. “I will keep back, and may be of use to load the spare guns—you shall have no screams or fainting.”

“Come then,” he said, “but promise to leave when I tell you.”

I followed him with fearful curiosity, and saw a party of five or six-and-thirty wretches emerging on the lawn. Some wore broad-leaved straw hats, some had handkerchiefs tied round their heads; all were in their shirt sleeves. Their unshaved faces and tattered soiled appearance—

their belts full of knives and pistols—their wild drunken yells and fierce aspects—filled me with horror, as it was shown vividly, at intervals, by the red flashes. “Let us fight to death,” I exclaimed, “rather than yield to such wretches as those.”

“We *must*,” said the old man, emphatically. He had stationed a couple of men at each window, near the end which the enemy approached, and as they were now within ear shot, he threw open the sash, and called to them to stand, on peril of death. The reply was a torrent of blasphemous abuse and a volley, which hurt no one, and they made a rush on the house. But as they advanced they were met by a well-directed fire, which evidently hit several of their party, and checked them. But I had seen enough, and as several of the labourers wives offered to load the guns, and even to fire them, if necessary, I gladly retired to be of some use, if possible, to poor Marie, who was in an agony of despair about her husband.

In our retirement, volley after volley reached our ears; then we could hear our defenders rush

from window to window, as the attacking party divided their forces and strove to distract our fire; at last, I ventured from my retreat, as a lull seemed to have hushed the uproar, and I could see from the men's pale faces, that it had grown fearfully serious. Mr. Earle ordered me back so sternly, that I dared not disobey; but I collected that our besiegers were holding council, and that so many had been hit, that Mr. Earle even contemplated a sortie.

For nearly an hour did this terrible quiet reign over the place. "Let them stay a little longer," said Henri, who had come in to console his wife; "and we shall have potent help. I suspect they are cutting faggots to pile against the house, and mean to burn it and all its inmates, but Colonel Leigh will soon be here—soon; Ben knows his way too well to miss it."

So saying, he left us; and for another half hour of terrible suspense and listening, no sound reached our ears: at last, a sudden, awful yell, as if a thousand fiends had been let loose, startled us; and I could not refrain from rushing to the window.

The whole gang, laden with dried fern tied in bundles, branches of trees, and combustible matter of every kind, came rushing on regardless of their companions, who fell under the fire from the house, which was continuously sustained, and in spite of it, raised a pile of faggots against the lower wooden portion of the house—more than one wretch fired his pistol into it; and I now, indeed, gave ourselves up for lost, when a shout rang above the horrid din of our beleaguers, and I perceived objects moving above the heads of the attacking crowd; next, the clear ringing tones of Reginald's voice struck me with a rapturous sense of safety: "Keep together, men; don't let one of them escape!"

A sound of more firing; the flashing of swords—the trampling of horses—reached me confusedly, and I became for a while insensible.

When I could again speak, I found we were quite free; Reginald after a hasty enquiry, had, with Frank and Henri de Lille, set off in pursuit of those that escaped, anxious to make a stern example of these villanous incendiaries.

In the meantime Mr. Earle and his brave band,



exhausted by the long struggle, called eagerly for food and wine; while we women, under Mrs. Earle's directions, were busy attending to the wounded—both friends and foes—and endeavouring to efface the signs of the fray.

The pretty garden in front was all trampled and destroyed; the eglantine and honeysuckle on the porch torn down in removing the faggots; yet in the reaction of our terror and despair we cared not, and set about our various tasks with uncommon zest and even gaiety.

"You must have all things right by to-morrow," said Mrs. Earle to her prime minister, an elderly woman servant: "for I will not have the wedding put off for any sympathizers; how frightened Eleanor will be to find the place in such a state."

The morning broke brightly; I had been sitting with Madame, who was much upset by the night's events, and was nervously depressed, and even hysterical, when it struck me I heard horse's hoofs advancing at a rapid pace. I did not interrupt Madame, who was speaking, but as soon as I could leave her I descended, for I began to be anxious for Reginald's return.

Mr. Earle and Frank were speaking earnestly in the hall, they looked pale and horror struck, so much so that I involuntarily stopped.

"I thought he had discharged both pistols," said Frank, "but he had not, and the last brought down the finest fellow that ever breathed."

Mr. Earle groaned.

"He is lying below, I did not like to bring him any nearer till I had told you."

"Who was shot—who?" I cried, darting wildly forward. Both turned, and were silent.

"Where!" I cried, almost inarticulately, "Where?"

"By the wood, beyond there," returned Frank, with involuntary obedience to my command: "But do not go, Mrs. Malcolm, for God's sake don't," he added, trying to hold me! but I tore myself from his grasp, and flew across the open space to the wood he had indicated.

And there, a numerous group gathered round some object, opened with mournful respect to let me pass. Yes, he was there, his stately person, but the heart that cherished me so well was still for ever; on a rude bed of branches and fern was

stretched the form of him I had seen full of glorious life not four hours past, and now he lay so calm, so gently still, with such placid repose on lip and brow!

I could not dream that it was death. No; it was but the sleep he needed—that his comrades watched, and I knelt down, and softly, to assure myself not to disturb him, kissed those calm lips, and then the icy touch chilled me with the dread knowledge I would not believe. I called him gently at first, but there was no reply.

Oh! never, never more would that loved voice meet my ear; and then, as this consciousness pressed upon me, I shrieked his name, tossing my arms aloft to Heaven in the wild agony of my fearful desolation.

Yes! He was dead—dead—

---

Many months, dear friend, have passed since I traced those last terrible words, and yet I could not resume my task. Still wondering at my own strong vitality, I write.

That I am here, and calm, though tranquil with the quietness of one who has outlived all

that can move her more! Yet not now unhappy.

I can still love the beauties of this fair world, and still accept with gratitude the kindness of friends.

For even in the terrible catastrophe that separated me from all I was—I saw no angry judgment. He, whom I loved, had done his work, had learned that which God sent him to acquire—therefore a noble spirit was recalled to its appointed place, while I had not yet accomplished my allotted task.

Therefore was I content to wait. But the hour of freedom is not now far off.

I have no history more to write. My life's life ended with the fatal blow that crushed my world of hope and happiness.

Long after, when I could hear it, they told me, that pressing hotly in pursuit of him who seemed to be the leader of the assault, Reginald at last came up with him—he had already wounded Henri slightly. The man was sinking with fatigue, and Reginald dismounted to assist

as well as capture him, when, drawing his remaining pistol, he shot his captor to the heart.

I have had kind friends and true, and more of sympathy than I deserve. Yet, mine has been a toilsome pilgrimage. But through all I have borne—the tears I have wept—the long passionate regrets that have eaten into my heart—there sounds this one strain of heavenly music—I have been loved, deeply, purely, fondly, and I have known the highest happiness that earth can give.

And for the rest, of grief, and loneliness, and long watching, they come from the Hand that sends no suffering needlessly—so be it.

I have been blest, too, in seeing the prosperity and happiness of those linked with my most precious memories; of tending her whose maternal sorrow first roused me from my own; until she passed from sleep to death—and now I can with tender but composed sadness, gaze even on that fair lake, of which once it was agony even to think.

Yes! even for me, life is not all sorrow; nor

can the combined miseries of earth utterly subdue a soul that is thoroughly conscious of its own eternal indestructible nature,

Farewell then; farewell, at this side of the grave!

---

“ To Mrs. ——,

“ From the Rev. T. H——.

“ Madame—

“ The enclosed packet was given to my care by Mrs. Malcolm, shortly before her death, to be conveyed to you after that event. I, therefore, lose no time in complying with the injunction of one so profoundly respected; and personally endeared to me as she was.

“ I am aware of the friendship which existed between you and the deceased when she came first to Canada; but you are probably, like myself, unacquainted with her previous history.

“ That history it was her pleasure to conceal;

and whatever might be her motive, it is impossible that any antecedent errors, even had they existed, would not have been amply atoned for by the vast amount of good which she accomplished quietly and unostentatiously here.

“Since the death of Madame Duchênois she lived alone at the Château Granville, except when visiting the families of Mr. Earle and his daughters. She lived but for others, and strange was it to see one so young and still so beautiful, for she preserved her pensive saddened beauty long, moving fearlessly and gently amid our vilest haunts of moral and physical disease; many a being was saved by her influence, for like our Lord, she not only gave out of the abundance of a fuller purse and more amply stored mind, but she was a sympathising personal friend to every erring sinner, winning, not appalling by her superior goodness.

“During the late plague of cholera she was indeed a ministering angel, and her over exertions hastened her own end, which however a gain and emancipation to herself, was a loss to the whole community.

“Young and old, rich and poor, flocked to her

funeral, and never has it been my lot to pronounce the words 'Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord' with a more perfect conviction of their fitness.

"Hoping you will have the goodness to let me know if you receive the packet in safety,

"I have the honour to be, madame,

"Your obedient Servant,

"T—— H——."

THE END.











